Positioning students as (non)writers: A case study of disengaged pedagogy in a suburban primary school

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COMPULSORY DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Signed Date: 12 March 2017

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This case study takes up a socio-cultural approach to literacy learning. It aims to examine the discourses of writing and what kinds of writer identities are constructed for students in a Grade 6 class, from a relatively well-resourced suburban government school in the Western Cape. It examines how teaching practices relate to the way the teacher conceptualises writing and what she believes about her students as writers. Given the challenges facing the rest of the system, suburban schools are often assumed to be sites of excellence. This notion, compounded with the continual failing literacy rates in South African primary schools and the need for more research on the teaching and learning of writing at the upper-primary level across school systems, informs this research. The purpose of this study is to: (1) inform teaching practices around literacy and writing in particular and (2) inform the need for ethnographic research to be conducted in 'well-resourced' suburban schools. It is my belief that a teacher's conceptions of writing and her beliefs about her students as writers are communicated to the students through her discourses and instructional strategies, which can inform students' perceptions of themselves and each other as writers.

This study will argue that Miss King's classroom discourse and 'reflections' with the interviewer show a severe disengagement from her pedagogy, students and the tasks she assigned. She showed neither sense of nor self-reflexivity about her teaching practices, effects on her students or her own limitations as a teacher. It is acknowledged that her students are not passive in the identities they take up or resist; indeed some students actively resisted both their teacher's positioning and the way she positioned them as non-writers and/or non-learners. Although students are able to construct their own identities (specifically as writers and learners), it will be argued that the teacher's disengagement from the content of the coursework and her students was potentially detrimental to all of the learners, as it limited opportunities for participation, development and imagination.

When I set out to conduct this research, I planned to examine classroom discourses and students' writing to determine if and how students identify as writers. Early on in my fieldwork, however, I realised that by answering this question only, I would not actually be making sense of what was occurring in this classroom, as required by a linguistic ethnographic approach. As will be discussed, the teacher's dominant discourse of writing was a) no different to the discourses she uses in her teaching about other aspects of literacy and her pedagogy in general, and b) so superficial, that it actually constructed students as *non*writers and, indeed, *nonlearners*. These observations, compounded

with the understanding that the representative from the Department of Basic Education who visited whilst I carried out my fieldwork, was 'happy' with the teacher and the school, required me to reframe my analysis around her dominant procedural discourse and her positioning of students as nonwriters and nonlearners. I feel it is important that we examine how a disengaged teacher can 'pass' as a 'good teacher,' under our current curricular and assessment practices across schools in South Africa.

1.2 Rationale

Across fields, there is a lack of research available on South African primary education. Literacy education is particularly under-researched, despite the knowledge that our primary schools are severely underperforming on literacy assessments at provincial, national and international levels (Fleisch, 2008). Hendricks (2007) specifies that 'how teachers' pedagogical choices shape children's writing…is a rich and largely unexplored area of research in South African schooling,' despite consistently low literacy achievement (114). My study will be focusing on Grade 6 learners, as it is the final year of primary education in the intermediate phase before the senior phase begins. The belief that children learn to read and then can apply these skills (Spaull, 2013) is embedded in the notion that literacy is an independent and internal skill rather than a repertoire of deeply contextually embedded practices.

As with the other grades, there are serious concerns relating to the overall literacy attainment in Grade 6. The 2007 Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Educational Quality (SACMEQ), which tested Grade 6 learners in Literacy and Numeracy, found that 'South African pupils ranked 10th of the 14 education systems for reading' (Spaull, 2013: 4) and that the Western Cape 'showed a decline' in performance in reading (Qetelo Meloi & Chetty, 2010: 60). The Grade 5 performance on the 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) assessment was disappointing: the average scale score was 550, yet the South African average was 421[1] (Mullis et al., 2013: 39). The Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) annual systemic tests for Language and Mathematics in Grade 3, 6 and 9 found that Grade 6 learners' pass rate (50%) in Language *decreased* from 36.9% in 2012 to 29.5% in 2013 (http://wced.pgwc.gov.za/comms/press/2014/14_18feb.html). Problematic as these assessments may be, the consistently low performance can be taken as an indicator that children are not progressing as they should.

South Africa cannot afford to solely focus on improving the aptitude of the lowest achievers; the Action Plan to 2014 explains that 'the top 5% of South Africa's Grade 5 performers in reading in the

[1] A clear divide between learners speaking English or Afrikaans and learners speaking an African language is noted (Spaull, 2013).

international PIRLS programme performed poorly in comparison with the top 5% of Grade 4 learners in other developing countries, such as Iran, Trinidad and Tobago' (71). This means that we must examine the practices of all types of schools and learners, not just the lowest-performing ones. 'If the results of any school or learner, even those already doing relatively well improve, this improves the national average[2]' (71).

There are initiatives to improve literacy, including the implementation of the Curriculum and Assessments Policy Statement (CAPS), the (aforementioned) Action Plan to 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025, the national workbooks initiative, and the implementation of the Annual National Assessments (ANAs), and yet South Africa is still confronted with failing literacy rates. There are several criticisms of these initiatives, a full discussion of which would go beyond the scope of this paper; however, it has been reasoned that the initiatives focus on basic skills to improve literacy and that they have been implemented without appropriate research being conducted first, or without adequate support for teachers. Cooper and McIntyper (1996) argue that 'any serious attempt to improve the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in schools must start from an understanding of what people in classrooms do at present' (as quoted in Probyn, 2006: 395).

1.3 CAPS Document

The South African education system has undergone three curriculum changes since 1997. The current program, the 2011 Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS), was created and implemented in response to the 'failed', 'child-centred' Outcomes Based Education (OBE) curriculum policy, and thus was designed in complete antithesis of OBE. The CAPS rigidly structures[3] daily lesson plans and assigns the teaching approaches that should be applied for specific aspects of the curriculum. Much of the research that does exist on South African education comes from studies done under OBE; as the ideologies of both curricular documents are so conflicting, it cannot be said that the findings are still relevant without up-to-date examinations. As a curriculum policy not only mandates what is to be

[2] Significantly, from the government's perspective, the improvement of the 'top' performers is important as it will help conceal the achievement of the lowest performers, rather than being important so that all children are extended and realize their potential.

[3] The document presents: prescribed time allocation for Literacy instruction which is divided into four discrete aspects; the suggested weekly teaching times for these four areas over two weeks; the learning and teaching support materials, which include various text types; an overview of the content, skills and strategies for the teaching of writing and presenting, as well as examples of the various language structures and conventions (i.e.: parts of speech, sentence structures); a list of the text types as well as a summary of each type and what 'should be taught'; the length of texts to be produced and 'engaged with' by learners in each grade; the number of vocabulary words to be learned; teaching plans of the 'minimum content to be covered' – although these outlines are not meant to be 'followed as is'; the formal assessment criteria for Grade 6; and the approaches to the teaching of writing.

taught, but informs how the teacher must approach his/her teaching, teachers have had to adjust their approaches and methods of instruction under the new curriculum.

The CAPS document asserts principles such as a 'critical' and 'active approach to learning, rather than rote and uncritical learning of given truths' (2011: 4). The Home Language level is meant to supply 'learners with a literary, aesthetic and imaginative ability' (8). Writing, it maintains, should be viewed as 'a powerful instrument of communication that allows learners to construct and communicate thoughts and ideas' and should 'enable learners to communicate functionally and creatively' (11). However, an initial examination of the CAPS suggests several inconsistencies in the document's view on writing, and calls into question the authenticity of its principles.

For example, the document also states that 'writing is important because it *forces* learners to think about *grammar* and *spelling'* which then 'encourages learners to process the language, speeds up language acquisition and increases accuracy' (11; emphasis mine). The routine formal assessments run by the individual schools are meant to include a transactional text and 'a short creative text, including appropriate and correct usage of format, grammar, punctuation and spelling' (93); the only information on how to assess the written pieces, in fact, is for appropriate use of language structures. Mendelowitz (2014) argues that 'the overarching discourse [of the CAPS] is 'no-nonsense', back to basics, prescriptive, highly structured, and 'teacher-proof', which it believes is the 'solution to the South African literacy crisis' (2). However, as realised in my research, it is not possible to make a curriculum 'teacher proof,' as teaching is not merely the transmission of information; a teacher can follow curricular guidelines, but there is no way to script the way interpersonal happenings in difference social spaces of teaching are treated.

Teachers have to make sense of these conflicting conceptions about writing. They have to make decisions about incorporating them into their own beliefs or resisting them, whilst working within the framework of the curriculum. We must ask how primary school teachers conceptualise writing under this curriculum; if and how teachers' conceptions are being delivered to students through classroom discourse; and what effects this has on students' perceptions of writing and what it means to be a writer.

1.4 Focus of research in the field of Literacy

Historically, research in the field of literacy and the focus of primary schools and literacy improvement programs have related to reading, largely ignoring the other language processes. This has influenced the organisation of curricula (including the CAPS), which maintain a compartmentalised view of literacy.

Separating lessons by reading, writing, speaking and listening suggests that these processes are viewed as discrete rather than inescapably integrated and reciprocal. This organization disregards the understanding that literacy development is, in fact, shaped by the complex relationship between these processes and that finding success in literacy will occur if teachers 'guide students to draw on their skills in the one [area] to develop their skills in the other' (Christie and Mission, 1998: 4). If we accept that there is indeed a relationship between the language processes, and that an ability to use both the receptive and productive language processes will improve literacy, there must be more links between the processes in teaching.

1.5 Importance of Writing

Responding to the value writing provides, Cremin and Myhill (2012: 1) reason that 'it remains a curiosity that so much energy is devoted to considerations of the best way to teach reading…when so little parallel interest is afforded to the teaching of writing'. That these processes are interconnected should preclude the necessity for research about writing. Furthermore, writing cannot be studied solely within the context of writing lessons. Nystrand, Gamoran and Carbonaro (1998) have argued that there is not enough research on 'the role general classroom discourse plays in writing development when the talk *is not specifically about writing* or primarily aimed at improving writing skills' (2; emphasis mine). This 'general classroom discourse' includes teacher-led discussions of reading tasks, teachers' emphasis on particular concepts, and student debates on various topics. This type of discourse does not make explicit connections to writing, so we must ask if there is a relationship and what this relationship looks like. It is logical to believe that 'teachers need to know as much as possible about all the effects of their instruction' in order to provide 'optimal' teaching (ibid).

1.6 Focal Research Questions

In light of the above discussion, the research questions are as follows:

A. *How does a Grade 6 teacher in a relatively well-resourced school conceptualise writing through her discourses and the activities she mandates?*
B. *How are children's identities as 'writers' constructed through classroom discourse?*
C. *How does the teacher position her students through her discourse about writing?*

1.7 Chapter Outline

Chapter 1: Introduction/Background of the Study

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework
In this chapter I outline the theoretical underpinnings of my research and review relevant research. I begin by contextualisng the research within previous studies of literacy, and writing in particular. I then describe my sociocultural approach to literacy, *and the way in which I conceptualize discourse and its relationship to social power, and identity positioning*. To do this I draw on Critical Discourse Analyse, Positioning Theory and Ivanič's Discourses of Writing.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Design Considerations
In this chapter I discuss the research design, data collection tools, and methods of data collection for this study. I give an overview of the data collected and my approach to data analysis. This study is a qualitative case study of one suburban South African classroom and I use ethnographic methods and Critical Discourse Analysis to interpret my data.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis
In this chapter I use discourse analysis of recorded classroom lessons and an interview with the teacher to identify the teacher's dominant discourses. I describe the impact of her dominant discourses and how these position students. I identify discourses of procedure and disengagement and aim to connect these discourses to the positioning of students as nonwriters.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations
In this chapter I reflect on the findings of this study, as well as make recommendations for future research within the field of language and literacy studies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will make clear the context of South African education as well as the sociocultural view of language and literacy as a social practice. Discourse will be defined according to this view. I describe the use of Positioning Theory, Critical Discourse Analysis and Ivanič's Discourses of Writing as conceptual resources that enabled this ethnographic style research project. A concluding examination of 'productive pedagogies' identified in the Queensland Project (Lingard, Hayes & Mills, 2003) and 'disengaged teachers' (Blackberry, Ng & Bartlett, 2014) serve as evaluative tools to discern effective or disengaged teaching practices.

2.2 South African Context

South African schooling is often described as two separate systems (Fleisch, 2008; Sailors, Hoffman, Matthee, 2007; Spaull, 2013) where the 'differentiating effects of apartheid persist' (Hendricks, 2007: 103). There are the well-resourced schools, where a majority of the students are middle-class, often white native English speakers, and then there are disadvantaged schools, consisting of black working-class and poor students in crowded classrooms, whose language of learning and teaching (LOLT) is English, despite a vast majority of these students speaking African home languages. The second group of schools are given 'little support for literacy development' (Probyn, 2009: 127), are deprived of resources, and usually learn in their 'home language' only until Grade 4, when they switch to English. Teachers' content and pedagogical knowledge, school leadership, the equity of resources, class sizes, teaching methods, beliefs about language and students' abilities, and learners' performances (in Literacy and Mathematics) have been documented as tremendously inadequate (Fleisch, 2008; Probyn, 2009). However, there is a lack of research[4] – particularly since the introduction of the CAPS policy – relating to each 'system' across primary school contexts, leading to ignorance of what is actually occurring within the many distinct classrooms across the country. It is irresponsible to assume that this 'tale of two systems' (Fleisch, 2008: 1) means that if a child attends a certain 'type' of school, s/he will be exposed to

[4] Much of the current findings are from research collected under the previous curricula (OBE). Given the drastically different roles of the two curricula, this must be considered when acquainting oneself with the current collated research on literacy in primary schools in South Africa. Mendelowitz (2014) explains that in her own research about teacher conceptions of creativity and writing, 'the need to draw predominantly on UK research is in itself a significant reflection of South African educational discourses, curriculum trends and the marginal position of creative writing within this educational landscape' (165).

certain discourses and receive a particular education; concurrently, it is irresponsible to assume that the only schools requiring research are those classified as severely disadvantaged and underperforming.

McKinney (2011) contends that ex model-C ('previously white') schools are 'uninterrogated spaces' (1). These schools 'produce successful matriculants' and are therefore 'perceived as representing the aspirational standard in South African schooling' without examining what is actually taking place in these spaces (1). McKinney cites the particular need for ethnography that can provide evidence of 'classroom practices which show how the cultural ethos is being constructed' (3). Her article describes the discursive moves between a 'white,' Grade 10 English teacher and her 'black' learners, wherein the teacher positions herself as 'powerful and authoritative knower' (18) and presents her perspectives as a singularly appropriate world view.

Hoadley's (2012) review of primary classroom based studies[5] in South Africa explains that the existing qualitative research shows 'consistency across studies regarding what is going on (and generally going wrong) in classrooms' (187). Instructional time is wasted, there is a focus on decoding – not reading for meaning, and there is generally a low level of cognitive demand. Probyn (2006) argues that 'little reading and writing happens in many South African classrooms' (391), whilst existing research shows that the writing that does occur is mostly reproductive, consisting of copying notes or grammatically correct sentences (Hendricks, 2007; Heugh 2000; Mendelowitz, 2014). In her study of additional language 'writing pedagogy' of two Grade 7 classes, one from a historically disadvantaged state school and the other a well-resourced independent school, Hendricks (2007) explains that both teachers fail to develop the cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) – a term coined by Cummins, 1984 – of their learners. The learners from the first school were given not given many writing opportunities – especially independently, 'on a topic of their own choice' and so it is doubtful that students felt any 'ownership' over their writing (Hendricks, 2007: 108). The learners from the second school 'had many opportunities for individual extended writing' but the tasks required mostly 'personal or expressive' compositions; 'the more abstract, impersonal, factual genres associated with disciplinary-based knowledge [were] neglected' (102).

In research with two Grade 7 English teachers 'fac[ing] different instituional constraints' (9) at their respective suburban Gauteng schools, Mendelowitz (2014) foregrounds the importance of creative writing in South African education. She argues that teachers' prior experiences and conceptions of writing affect their 'enactments of imaginative writing pedagogy' (26), including their discourse and the

[5] Not specific to Literacy studies.

activities and teaching methods they employ. She also maintains that the CAPS policy holds a ''back to basics' approach as a solution to the South African literacy crisis' (3), restricting teachers from inspiring 'creative possibilities' (1). Mendelowitz highlights that teachers use multiple, and possibly conflicting, discourses; these messages tell students about what is important, and position[6] students. Her research pays particular attention to and differentiates between 'deficit' and 'enabling' discourses, which 'are commonly thought of in relation to teachers' perceptions of learners' abilities' (11).

The existing collated research on the discourse of official practices in lessons suggests that teachers are using tightly controlled Initiate-Response-Evaluation (IRE) or Initiation-Response-Feedback (IRF) structure (Cazden, 2001; Geelan, et al., 2015; Nystrand et al, 1998; Vygotsky, 1980). In this exchange, the teacher 'initiates' an interaction (often in the form of a closed question); a student then 'responds' to the teacher; the teacher then 'evaluates' the answer or responds to the student's response with feedback (Mercer, 2010: 7). The IRE discoursal stucture can allow the teacher to 'provide access to discourses and forms of knowledge beyond the children's independent means' (Hicks, 1995: 15). However, this discoursal structure provides the teacher more speaking turns than the learners; therefore, although 'there is little doubt that teachers do ask a lot of questions…both the prevalence of questions in the initiating move of the teacher and the generally limited or 'closed' form such questions often take' (Dufficy, 2005: 62) signals that teachers may not be 'encouraging and extending pupil contributions to promote higher levels of interaction and cognitive engagement' (Hardman, Smith and Wall 2003: 212 in Dufficy, 2005: 63). This occurs despite widespread agreement across fields that learning occurs best through discussion, active engagement, and pupil participation (Cazden, 2001; Geelan, et al., 2015; Nystrand et al, 1998; Vygotsky, 1980).

2.3 Language and Literacy as social practice

People commonly refer to literacy as the ability to read and write, without questioning what it actually *means* to 'read' and 'write' or acknowledging the different kinds of reading and writing practices depending on the texts. A cognitive, or psychological, view of literacy affirms this notion, conceptualizing literacy as a set of universal skills 'residing inside people's heads' (Gee, 2008: 2). The learner's ('natural') ability to become literate determines his/her 'success' in literacy, irrespective of sociocultural contexts. The view that reading and writing are 'natural' processes, rather than being shaped by the contexts in

[6] 'All texts—spoken or written—construct a favored position from which they are to be received' (Gee 2008: 129). Subjects are positioned by others as certain 'types of people' (ibid.), thus constructing an identity for the subjects. Subjects can either take up this positioning, allowing it to become part of their own discourse and identity, or can resist the positioning, constructing new identities for themselves. This is discussed later in the Chapter.

which persons *learn* to read and write various texts, implies 'that if… [all] children are simply exposed to the same texts and facts in school, they will all 'pass the test' and problems of equity will thereby be taken care of' (Gee, 2003: 27).

A cognitive view of literacy often values a 'skills based' or 'phonemic' approach to literacy learning, believing that as long as someone has an understanding of how to decode letters and words, s/he can theoretically read anything. However, this is a misleading assertion, as being able to decode is not the same as understanding meaning; if a person cannot make sense of what s/he has read (or been exposed to in any sense), can we really say that s/he has 'read' (understood) it? Respectively, if a person does not understand the social practices that accompany a type of literacy (e.g. writing down and exchanging recipes)– how can s/he participate in this practice? How can a person *write* his/her own text – take part in the discourse – if s/he has not got access to the socially accepted ways of doing and being accompanying it?

'Language and literacy researchers increasingly realize that contexts of language and literacy development are more than mere settings for development' (Nystrand et al, 1998: 3). This research is informed by the conceptualizing of language and literacy as social practice (Barton and Hamilton 2000; Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Fairclough, 1992; Gee, 2008;). Literacy is 'a socially *constructed* phenomenon;' a 'process of demonstrating knowledgeability' of how to 'do' literacy in the 'socially approved and approvable' ways of the context[7] (Cook-Gumperz, 1986: 3; emphasis mine). Therefore, literacy cannot be seen as merely reading and writing based on cognitive skills, as, in order to be viewed as 'literate' in a domain, a person must be able to recognize 'various distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, knowing, and using various objects and technologies, that constitute the social practice' (Gee, 2003: 29); it will do a person no good if s/he can simply decode and encode isolated words.

As language is, primarily, communicative, the purpose of the four language processes (listening, speaking, reading and writing) is to construct and recognize meanings. Despite ample evidence of the complex relationship between these four processes, they are often still viewed in isolation to one another (Bourne, 2002). Goodman (1992) considers the relationship between the four language processes, identifying reading and listening as 'receptive' language processes and writing and speaking as 'productive, generative' processes, but explains that all four are 'constructive, active, and transactional' (80). Gee (2003) maintains that 'writers (in the sense of people who can write texts that are recognizably part of a particular social practice) *potentially* make better readers (people who can

[7] Gee (2008) states that 'to appreciate language in its social context, we need to focus not on language alone, but rather on what [he calls] 'Discourses' (2) and that language and literacy make 'no sense outside of Discourses' (4).

understand texts from or about a given social practice)' (29; emphasis original). Therefore, the four language processes should be interrelated in literacy lessons, not taught independently as though they are separate 'skills'.

2.4 Writing as a Social Practice

As part of literacy, writing is inherently, also a social practice. As highlighted by Kress, this idea is highly contested by many who see writing as an individual or 'a lonely activity' (1982: 56 as quoted in Bourne, 2002: 241); 'a solitary practice' where 'the 'isolated author', [struggles] to communicate with an unknown reader' (Bourne, 2002: 241). Noting the challenges of writing (versus speaking), Collins and Michaels (1986) quote Rosen (1971):

> The writer is a lonely figure cut off from the stimulus and corrective of listeners. He must be a predictor of reactions and act on his predictions. He writes with one hand tied behind his back being robbed of gesture. He is robbed too of his tone of voice and the aid of clues the environment provides. He is condemned to monologue, there is no one to help out, to fill the silences, put words in his mouth or make encouraging noises. (Rosen, 1971: 142 in Collins and Michaels, 1986: 207)

We can reduce the challenges the 'lonely writer' may face by conceptualising writing as a necessarily social practice, whereby teachers' discourses, the activities s/he assigns, and strategies s/he uses, foster the social aspect of writing. van der Westhuizen (2009) affirms that 'in situations where learners write and discuss their writings, the interaction around texts allows for exchanges of ideas and comparison of beliefs and conceptions. In this process, there is a transition from *external communication to inner dialogue* and the expression of thoughts in linguistic forms' (473; emphasis mine).

Dyson (2010) states that 'there will always be an unofficial world, a network of relationships and practices among children that supports, interferes with, or simply co-exists with the official one' (26). She argues that an asocial view of writing development defies what we know about children's actual writing practices, and indeed that of adults as well; she, amongst others, has repeatedly found that children share, copy and indeed write texts collaboratively. Bourne (2001) explains that in her research in a multilingual primary classroom in London, 'even when [written work] is meant to be individual work, [it] is in reality jointly constructed in social interaction in the classroom' (112; see also Nystrand, Gamoran, and Carbanaro, 1998). Based on this information, students' writing is affected by the social practices used in the writing space; thus, students' writing can improve if the approach to writing in the classroom space is that of competency in a set of practices that can, indeed, be improved upon.

2.5 Discourse and Identity

A sociocultural view of literacy demands a focus on the social context in which *discourse* occurs. Discourse has at least two prevailing definitions. The first definition refers to syntactical structures and 'stretches of language which 'hang together' so as to make sense to some community of people, such as a contribution to a conversation or a story' (Gee, 2008: 115). The second definition of discourse is more comprehensive; it entails 'a dialectic of both linguistic form and social communicative practices… Oral and written texts that can be examined after the fact and socially situated practices that are constructed in moment-to-moment interaction' (Hicks, 2003: 3). Gee differentiates between 'discourse' with a lower case 'd' and 'Discourse' with a capital 'D'. He uses discourse 'for language in use or connected stretches of language that make sense, like conversations, stories, reports, arguments, essays, and so forth' (2008: 154). Whereas 'Discourse' encompasses not only 'discourse' but also 'distinctive ways of acting, interacting, valuing, feeling, dressing, thinking, believing, with other people and with various objects, tools, and technologies, so as to enact specific socially recognizable identities engaged in specific socially recognizable activities' (155). As I view 'discourse' and 'Discourse' as inseparable (and when analyzing discourse, Discourse is inherently analyzed as well) and as other theorists use 'discourse' to represent both meanings, I will not be differentiating between the two. In Gee's well-known definition, 'Discourses are ways of behaving, interacting, valuing, thinking, believing, speaking, and often reading and writing, that are accepted as instantiations of particular identities' (Gee, 2008: 3). A person's appearance and physical bodily positioning and movement are as much part of his/her discourse as the language s/he uses. In summary, there is a 'duality of discourse' in the oral and/or written products and the 'constitutive discursive practices' (Hicks, 2003: 4, utilizing Fairclough, 1992). When analyzing discourse for any purpose, one must consider the social context, the ideologies and power relations at play, examining the 'recognisable associations among values, beliefs and practices which lead to particular forms of situated action, to particular decisions, choices and omissions, as well as to particular wordings' (Ivanič, 2004: 220).

This view of Discourse, as being shaped by and in turn shaping the social world, underpins Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Janks, 1997, Gee 2008). CDA asserts that because all discourses are social, they are thus ideological, implicated in the construction and distribution of power, and that some discourses are valued more than others' (Rogers, et al., 2005: 370). CDA draws on a Foucauldian view of discourse and subjectivity, that

> the self is not fixed in a set of socialized, transferable roles, but is constantly positioned and repositioned through discourse. Individuals both negotiate and are shaped by their

> subject positions within a range of different and often conflicting discourses, which vary according to historical, cultural or social context (Baxter, 2002: 829).

People occupy different identity positions depending on their social context, and, significantly, 'are sometimes contradictorily positioned within shifts in discourse' (Bourne, 2002: 242).

2.6 Positioning Theory

The concept of multiple identities can also be understood using Davies & Harré's (1990) 'multiplicities of self' (3) – or ways of viewing oneself based on social context and available discourses – whereby we 'imagine' and discover which 'categories' of identity we can and do 'fit' (7) through our interactions. Davies & Harré (1990) use the concepts of 'position' and 'positioning' to analyse how selves are constructed 'in relation to other people' (16). They also explain that 'positioning is a discursive practice' that constitutes the speaker and his/her addressee/s in particular ways (16). Essentially, positioning theory posits that 'communication shapes identity' (Kroløkke, 2009: 765) as 'people use words (and discourse of all types) to locate themselves and others' (Moghaddam & Harré, 2010: 2-3). The discourses we participate in provide opportunities for identities to be constructed in 'self' or 'reflexive positioning,' and 'other positioning,' as each participant in any speech act is simultaneously positioning him/herself, the other participant(s), and being positioned by those participant(s). Discursive positioning by others can either be resisted or taken up.

Different interlocutors do not necessarily have equal access to the discourses being used or the positions permitted. In the context of schooling, Davies & Harré (1990) explain that students may be 'invited' or 'required to conform' to a teacher's 'storyline' (12) – a storyline being the position a teacher has taken up for herself and the position(s) she has made available to the students. Of course, students may not want to take up the positioning constructed for them. 'They may pursue their own story line, quite blind to the story line implicit in the [teacher's] utterance, or as an attempt to resist' (12) thus repositioning themselves and the teacher. Alternatively, the students may 'conform because they do not define themselves as having choice, but feel angry or oppressed or affronted or some combination of these' (12).

'Sociolinguistic analyses based on positioning theory can provide greater insight into what teachers talk about and how' (McVee, Baldassarre & Bailey, 2004: 2). Recognising that and understanding how teachers' discursive practices position their students is vital to education research, providing an understanding of how we can 'construct more consciously to sustain norms that promote the ends we profess to desire' (Slocum-Bradley, 2010: 81). If we want students to take up academic

identities, e.g.: to be writers, we must consciously use discursive practices that position and enable them to position themselves in this way.

2.7 Discourses of writing

Bourne (2010) maintains that the discourses teachers use about writing position learners in certain ways. Whilst examining 'the construction of children's identities as 'writers' through their positioning' (241) in the many discursive practices of the classroom, Bourne (2010) argues that:

> It is the positioning of subjects within the discourses they have access to and which they are able to bring with them to the classroom, together with the discursive practices they experience in the classroom context, which produces their written text; and it is to this social positioning that educators might more usefully look rather than to constructs of identity such as 'maturity', 'ability' or 'bright- ness' located within the child. (241)

Bourne references her previous work in which she examines the 'discursive construction of the concept of 'ability'' in classrooms, and relates this to how children can be positioned as 'competent writers' (245) or 'less able writers' (249) by the teacher. She contends that how students 'experience' the teacher's 'demands' will correlate to how they view themselves as writers (248). This is not to say that students' identities are only shaped by the teacher's discourses; she reminds us that the discourses used by all the members of the classroom, the discourses and positions available to students outside of the classroom, as well as the reflexive positions the students maintain all work to construct their identities as writers (252).

Ivanič (2004: 220) identifies six major discourses, or 'configurations of beliefs and practices in relation to the teaching of writing', in English-speaking countries, which may emerge in pedagogic practice. The 'layers' comprising this view describe beliefs about language (Figure 2.1); each outer layer incorporates the ideologies of the layer(s) inside of it. The layers, centrifugally, are: 1) text 2) cognitive processes 3) event and 4) sociocultural and political context. 'Text' is the narrowest view of language, and can range from only the 'linguistic substance of language' to all multimodal texts (Ivanič, 2004: 222-223). 'Cognitive processes' relates to 'what is happening in the minds of the people who are *involved* in producing and comprehending language' (223; italics mine). The 'event' layer refers to the '*immediate* social context in which language is being used' (223). The 'sociocultural and political context…goes beyond the material facts of language and language use…to identify why they are the way they are' (224). This comprehensive, multi-layered view of language assists in the classification of a person's discourse(s) of writing, as a person's view of language (i.e.: in which layer(s) their beliefs lie) will influence their beliefs about writing and learning to write, as well as their approaches to teaching and assessing.

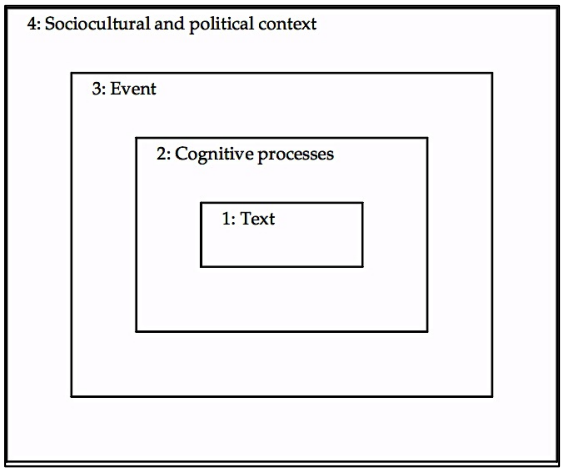


Figure 2.1: Ivanič's (2004) multi-layered view of language (223)

Ivanič then presents a framework (Figure 2.2) for identifying and analyzing these discourses in pedagogical data, including classroom observations and teacher interviews. The six discourses she describes are named as skills, creativity, process, genre, social practices, and sociopolitical. She makes it clear that 'actual texts and events' (226) as well as teaching approaches about writing are often 'discoursally hybrid, drawing on two or more discourses' (224), which may be visible even within a single lesson. Still, one discourse may dominate, as evidenced 'by the way in which particular beliefs and practices are foregrounded at the expense of others' (227). Ivanič maintains that a comprehensive approach to the teaching of writing would incorporate all six discourses. These discourses are described below, developing on a continuum from a textual to a sociopolitical view of language.

Discourses	*Layer in the comprehsive view of language*	*Beliefs about writing*	*Beliefs about learning to write*	*Approaches to the teaching of writing*	*Assessment criteria*
1. A SKILLS DISCOURSE	THE WRITTEN TEXT	Writing consists of applying knowledge of sound–symbol relationships and syntactic patterns to construct a text.	Learning to write involves learning sound–symbol relationships and syntactic patterns.	SKILLS APPROACHES *Explicit teaching* 'phonics'	accuracy
2. A CREATIVITY DISCOURSE	THE MENTAL PROCESSES OF WRITING	Writing is the product of the author's creativity.	You learn to write by writing on topics which interest you.	CREATIVE SELF-EXPRESSION *Implicit teaching* 'whole language' 'language experience'	interesting content and style
3. A PROCESS DISCOURSE		Writing consists of composing processes in the writer's mind, and their practical realization.	Learning to write includes learning both the mental processes and the practical processes involved in composing a text.	THE PROCESS APPROACH *Explicit teaching*	?
4. A GENRE DISCOURSE	THE WRITING EVENT	Writing is a set of text-types, shaped by social context.	Learning to write involves learning the characteristics of different types of writing which serve specific purposes in specific contexts.	THE GENRE APPROACH *Explicit teaching*	appropriacy
5. A SOCIAL PRACTICES DISCOURSE		Writing is purpose-driven communication in a social context.	You learn to write by writing in real-life contexts, with real purposes for writing.	FUNCTIONAL APPROACHES *Explicit teaching* PURPOSEFUL COMMUNICATION *Implicit teaching* 'communicative language teaching' LEARNERS AS ETHNOGRAPHERS *Learning from research*	effectiveness for purpose
6. A SOCIOPOLITICAL DISCOURSE	THE SOCIOCULTURAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXT OF WRITING	Writing is a sociopolitically constructed practice, has consequences for identity, and is open to contestation and change.	Learning to write includes understanding why different types of writing are the way they are, and taking a position among alternatives.	CRITICAL LITERACY *Explicit teaching* 'Critical Language Awareness'	social responsibility?

Figure 2.2: Ivanič's framework of discourses of writing and learning to write

A skills discourse of writing is related to the 'text' view of language, foregrounding beliefs that 'learning to write consists of learning a set of linguistic skills' and that 'what counts as good writing is determined by the correctness of the letter, word, sentence, and text formation' (227). A creativity, or 'creative self-expression', discourse of writing 'also focuses on the written text, but is concerned with its content and style rather than its linguistic form' (229). 'In principle [a process discourse] encompasses both the cognitive and the practical processes' of writing, although it is 'questionable whether [the cognitive aspects] of writing can be assessed' (231). The genre discourse of writing, concerned with the explicit teaching of 'a set of text-types *shaped* by social context', highlights 'writing as a product…shaped by the event of which it is part' (234; emphasis mine). The view that 'writing is purpose-driven communication in a social context' (234) indicates a social practices discourse, regarding 'the event' around which writing occurs as the most significant aspect of writing. A sociopolitical discourse of writing is distinguished 'by references to politics, power, society, ideology, representation, identity, social action and social change, by the explicit pedagogy [of these references]…and by a critical stance towards the practice of assessment' (239).

This tool allows us to explore the beliefs and discourses of teachers, and indeed for teachers to explore their own beliefs and discourses, to ensure we examine the complex relationship between texts, cognitive processes, and immediate and broader social contexts. Understanding the possible tensions and inconsistencies between the beliefs *portrayed* in one's practice and what one claims s/he believes is necessary to improve teaching. Ivanič's framework can unveil these tensions or make teachers aware of the broader messages they are relaying to their students through their discursive practices. My research uses the framework as an 'analytical tool for coding interview data…[and] observational data about writing' (240).

Ivanič acknowledges that 'there may also be other discourses which are relevant to literacy pedagogy' (240); she 'highlights the incomplete nature of her framework as an analytic tool, suggesting that there is also scope to add to and develop the framework in its current form (Baker, 2017: 6). Whilst acknowledging that 'assessment runs through each of [Ivanič's] six discourses' (15) Baker (2017) found in her research on writing pedagogy in UK A-level classrooms that 'the centrality of assessment in the treatment of language' and its 'principal cause for the students' challenges' (1) at the research sites 'create[d] an 'assessment discourse of writing.' In adapting Ivanič's framework, Baker characterizes an assessment discourse as

> a preoccupation with the way that writing will be treated/graded. [It] can also be traced in the messages communicated to students about writing … [Its use] highlights the

power and influence that assessment has over students' and institutional understandings of their writing, which in turn inform their practices and products.

Before my research began, my expectations were that I would find a combination of the discourses Ivanič (2004) presents. It could be argued that Miss King's discourses do, indeed, fit within Baker's adapted framework, calling on Ivanič's 'skills discourse' and 'process discourse' and Baker's 'assessment discourse'. It became apparent, however, that the teacher's use of these discourses was so superficial, I could not accurately place them within the framework. Thus, I have identified her 'dominant discourse' (Ivanič, 2004) as a 'procedural discourse,' the examination of which will be discussed in the data analysis chapter.

2.8 Qualities of Effective Teachers

As a teacher's discourse is inextricably linked to her teaching practice, it is important to understand what 'effective teaching' looks like, according to a sociocultural view of learning. The Queensland 'productive pedagogies' model (Lingard, Hayes & Mills, 2003) identifies elements of teaching strategies that can be used to measure teacher effectiveness.

Lingard, Hayes & Mills (2003) acknowledge that 'in the current political and policy context, placing teachers and their knowledge at the core of schooling practices and policy is a dangerous strategy' (417) as it may appear to disregard the societal structures and inequities that continue to have drastic effects on student academic and social outcomes. However, recentering pedagogical practices in 'educational policy' may help to improve students' outcomes, as this ensures that teachers are 'engaged in learning' and in teaching (399, 401) and thus working towards success for their individual students. They used the productive pedagogies model created via the Queensland School Reform Longitudinal Study (QSRLS), drawing from a range of literature, including that of sociolinguists to 'provide a lens through which educators can see existing teaching practices, with a view to reconceptualising them in ways that increase the academic and social outcomes for *all* students' (410). The model (Appendix 1) is made up of twenty components found in effective teaching that are 'potentially observable within any classroom irrespective of subject area or age level' (410). The elements of the productive pedagogy model signal the practices of an engaged teacher who has centered her students' learning and relate to discursive patterns in the classroom; for example, the importance of breaking the common IRE discoursal pattern, and instead allowing 'sustained dialogue between students, and between teachers and students' is identified (410).

The productive pedagogies model serves a contextual perspective in the argument I will be making about Miss King's *disengaged* pedagogy in my analysis; many of the practices identified in the model, which highlight the need for student-centric pedagogy, were absent from her teaching. Therefore, it is necessary to juxtapose these effective practices by examining what disengaged teaching looks like.

2.9 Teacher Disengagement

Miss King's superficial teaching practices, which are explored in the data analysis chapter, lead to the conclusion that her dominant discourse is procedural, and that she, ultimately, is disengaged from her students and her teaching. It is notable that so much research addresses student disengagement, yet so little research sets out to examine *teacher* disengagement. This is surprising, given that 'teachers' engagement levels are directly related to those of their students — and thereby to student achievement outcomes' (Gallup, 2014: 27). The 2014 Gallup Survey Report on the state of schooling in the USA highlights research with the goal of providing 'insights about what leaders can do to improve engagement and student achievement in their schools' (1). It describes what schools can do to foster student achievement, comprehensively explaining the importance of engagement of three main stakeholders in classrooms and schools: students, teachers and principals.

Of the 7,200 K-12 teachers sampled, 56% identify as 'not engaged' – 'they are not emotionally connected to their workplaces and are unlikely to devote much discretionary effort to their work' (26) and 13% feel 'actively disengaged' — they are so dissatisfied that they are likely 'spreading negativity' (26). Disengaged teachers are less likely to be emotionally invested in their students or cognitively invested in the teaching and learning, so it is unsurprising that their dispositions can drive student disengagement (27).

Blackberry, Ng & Bartlett (2014) used observations and interviews in a three-year longitudinal study to examine how disengaged, Year 7 teachers in Queensland schools, may yield disengaged students. They 'define professional engagement as a teacher's active and conscious effort to affect teaching and learning outcomes for both their students and themselves' and note that 'effective, engaged teachers' are able to engage students in learning, as they 'are student-oriented,' meaning they have a strong desire for their students to succeed and take steps to enable success (1). In contrast, 'disengaged teachers' neither experiment with their pedagogy nor seek to improve it; they do not develop and change their practices based on individual students and the unique culture of their class.

Rather, their instruction is 'superficial,' disregarding the individual needs of students, thus leading to 'superficial learning' (1).

In the review of literature on teacher retention, Moore Johnson et al., (2005) conclude that teachers leave the profession for a variety of reasons, and that in order to address the problematic areas in policy and within schools, we must use qualitative research to understand the context. The 'background and characteristics of the teachers being studied, as well as their experiences and workplace conditions … how the principal leads or whether the teacher has access to a good curriculum or useful professional development' (103) may contribute to teacher disengagement. We know, for instance, that 'when teachers do not feel effective in their work with students … disengagement may follow' (Moore Johnson et al., 2005: 82). With this in mind, the data analysis will firstly 'situate' Miss King within her school and within the broader context of the South African education system, to provide the context for her disengagement.

2.10 Conclusion

In this chapter I described the sociocultural approach to my research and the value in using theories of discourse, positioning and CDA to make sense of observational and interview data. Ivanič's (2004) Discourses of Writing framework was depicted, and the need for its adaptation was noted. Descriptions of 'productive pedagogies' and, contrastingly, 'disengaged teaching' were provided so that Miss King's teaching practices could be accurately described in the data analysis. In the next chapter, I will seek to explain how I used the aforementioned theory and research tools in my ethnography of a particular classroom.

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I outline my research design and the tools I used for data collection and analysis. I explain how the particular practices in the classroom changed the focus of my observations before defending my use of ethnography and Critical Discourse Analysis. A description of the classroom site is provided before I note the validity of my study and the ethical considerations made.

3.2 Research Design

When I set out to conduct this research, I wanted to choose a school with minimal obstructions to teaching and learning. Windsted is a relatively well-resourced suburban school. Upon meeting the teacher, I explained my interest in writing pedagogy and students' written products, as well as my research objective: to observe if and how students identify as writers. The teacher agreed to my researching in her classroom without hesitation. This led me to believe that she was confident in her teaching of writing. I expected writing to be taught using the process approach, as outlined in the CAPS document, but was curious as to what [other] discourses about writing, as described in Ivanič's 2004 framework, the teacher might take up. What I observed, however, was a superficial coverage of the mandated topics set out in the CAPS-affiliated textbook. As I will argue through my analysis of data in Chapter 4, the teacher's discourse is best described as procedural, and her disposition disengaged. Although this finding did not affect my research tools or methods, the story being told in this space and within the data conflicted with the story I set out to tell; I felt it was necessary to shift from my original focus on students' writing and the identities they construct, to how the teacher's dominant procedural discourse and disengagement positioned students as nonwriters.

I chose to employ ethnographic and sociolinguistic methods in my research, which involve the 'close and detailed examination of classroom talk in its social and cultural context,' (Mercer, 2010: 2) so as to explore the classroom's specific 'ecological niche' (Nystrand, Gamoran, Carbonaro, 1998). Linguistic ethnography brings together a social and linguistic perspective as, 'language and the social world are mutually shaping' (Rampton et al., 2004: 2). Examination of how 'situated language' is used offers important 'insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in [the] everyday activity' of a specific space (2). I agree with Mercer's (2010) statement that the members of a classroom 'use talk…to negotiate and explore their identities' (2), which is why I set out to study the discourses used in this space.

A common argument against qualitative, ethnographic research is that it over-values the 'local' and does not grant generalisations to be made across contexts in the way quantitative research can. I have not generalised how literacy, particularly writing, is taught and conceptualised by teachers in South Africa; however, a quantitative approach could not accomplish this either, as this research would not provide a full picture of the classroom 'niches.' We cannot understand how broader literacies and language are being used 'without seeing [language and literacy use] and understanding it in its immediate context' (Walsh, 2006: xi). Furthermore, ethnographic data is necessary in classroom writing practices to counter the notion of writing as a 'solitary practice' with an 'isolated author' (Bourne, 2002: 241) as this view has enabled curricula and teaching professionals to maintain exclusively cognitive ideologies of writing (241). This view of writing is maintained by Miss King, and, I will argue, contributes to her disengagement, because she doesn't believe her practices might enable her students.

Linguistic ethnography prompted me to use interviews with and lesson observations of the classroom participants. From my observational data, I was able to identify specific literacy events that occurred in this social space, (e.g. the teacher's monological introductions, filled with guidelines, for writing tasks) which were indicators of broader literacy practices (e.g. that the teacher believes writing involves following rules). By determining what the typical practices were and how the teacher and students constructed them, I was able to characterize what constitutes literacy and writing in this classroom.

My research will help to emphasise the need for ethnographic research in suburban South African classrooms so as to depict what 'good teaching' looks like under the CAPs. It will refute the notion that we can 'teacher proof' curriculum. Most importantly, it argues that teacher discourses position students in particular ways, and that students who have access to other discourses are able to resist and take up positions unavailable to them in the classroom; students without these alternate discourses, however, are being unfairly disadvantaged by the closing down of opportunities to engage in literacy and language.

3.3 Data Collection Tools

I firstly met with the teacher to discuss the aims of my research and the methodology; at this meeting she agreed that I could use her class for my case study. I began my fieldwork by sitting-in with the class for a week of informal observations. It was during this time that I established a rapport with the teacher and students, so that both parties felt comfortable allowing me into their professional and personal space. After the initial observation period, I conducted classroom observations for three weeks, with the

intention of following the students through a literacy unit; unexpectedly, there was no discernable theme connecting the assigned literacy tasks (Appendix 2), other than students having to write two poems during my fieldwork. During this time, I took field notes to record my observations of all subjects the students participated in.

The English lessons were the only lessons video-recorded. Initially, I alternated the camera's position between the back right and the back left corner of the classroom, so as to be as unobtrusive as possible. The students voiced their comfort with the video-recording equipment and myself early on, and so, on several occasions, I placed the camera at the front of the classroom to as to observe student facial expressions and physical movement from the perspective of the teacher's physical position. As I wanted to capture both the teacher and students' turns, I kept a microphone on the teacher's desk, the table at the side of the room, or on a student's desk. Students were hyper-aware of the microphone's placement; although some carried on in what appeared to be a 'normal' fashion, it was clear that some students discontinued their normal speech patterns, whilst others 'played-up' for the device, conducting interviews with each other or whispering into the microphone with comments or stories about miscellaneous topics.

During my fieldwork, I photocopied textbook pages, worksheets and learners' texts at the research site. The written compositions were examined in relation to the oral discourses used during the school day in order to see how the oral might be taken up in the written. Whilst there were examples of the teachers' discourses being taken up in students' writing, e.g.: the teacher's misidentification of and reference to a 'stanza' as a 'paragraph' and several students' use of paragraphs in their poems, rather than stanzas (Appendix 3), as well as Miss King's disengagement with her students written products in her marking, e.g. noncommittal responses to extended writing pieces, such as 'Well done!' and 'Well tried!', an analysis of the written work could not be addressed in this paper.

Data Type		
Field Notes	Week 1: 13 – 17 October 2014	
	Week 2: 20 – 24 October 2014	
	Week 3: 27 – 31 October 2014	
Video-Recordings	Week 1: 4 hours 10 minutes	
	Week 2: 4 hours 50 minutes	
	Week 3: 5 hours 20 minutes	
Video-Stills	11	
Semi-Structured interviews	1 teacher interview	30 minutes
	12 student interviews	5-10 minutes each
Photocopies of textbook pages referred to by teacher in transcripts included in dissertation	2	
Photocopies of selected learners' written texts (referred to in transcripts included in dissertation)	2	

Table 3.1: Data Tools

I carried out semi-structured, informal interviews with twelve of the 29 students in the class, based on the students' desire to take part (several students declined the invitation; it required a shorter break time and it is probable that some students did not wish to speak with me or about writing) and the researcher's interest in their experiences as writers. These students represent different genders, backgrounds, and abilities – as perceived through my interpretations of their discourses and behaviour during lessons. By 'behaviour' I mean how the students interact and what discourses they engage in with the teacher, their peers, and in self-monitoring. I had expected to concentrate on 2-4 students, and learn about their feelings about writing and identities in greater detail; however, I found that many of the students wanted to share their writing and thoughts with me. As will be evident in the Data Analysis, these students were constrained in their ability to exert agency in their lessons; I believed it was important that they felt their voices were being heard and that someone was interested in their thoughts. Although I had loosely structured, open-ended questions to frame our conversations, such as 'What makes someone a good writer?' and more specific questions for particular students, such as

'Where did you get the idea [to audio record 'scrambled' thoughts]?' the students guided the direction of each interview; thus, conversations were very specific to the individual writer.

I conducted a semi-structured interview with the teacher at the end of the observation period where I listened attentively, paused long enough for her to articulate her responses, probed and prompted appropriately, and encourage her to speak freely (Newton, 2010). I wanted to develop an understanding of her conceptions of writing and the beliefs she had about her students as learners and writers. I expected that the language the teacher would use during the interview would offer 'insight [into her] perceptions and values' (Newton, 2010: 2) as the 'different ways of conceptualising literacy lie at the heart of 'discourses'…[including] associations among values, beliefs and practices which lead to particular forms of situated action, to particular decisions, choices and omissions, as well as to particular wordings' (Ivanič, 2004: 220). I had prepared questions, but anticipated that, as with the students, this interview would be more of a conversation. The questions I asked included: 'What is your approach to teaching writing?' 'What helps a child become a better writer?' 'How do you decide what topics to cover [in English]?'

I transcribed all video-recordings, inserting my field notes where appropriate, and interviews. The transcription conventions (Table 3.2) I used followed standard orthography where possible.

Transcription Conventions		
Symbol	Example	Comments
Speaker change		Start new line with new speaker
,		Short pause
…		Longer pause
. . .		Pause lasting more than 5 seconds
[…]		Text omitted
Repeated letter	off the top of my headdd	Speaker extends phoneme at the end of a word
Colon after letter in middle of word	Long::er	Speaker extends phoneme within a word
(italics in parenthesis)	(*Giggling from students)*	Nonverbal cues
		Movement
		To describe how something was said
		Background noise
/	N: um so you're seeing it/ T: yes/ N: as/ T: perfect/ N: you're feeling it	More than one interlocutor speaking at the same time
Italics		Emphasis used by speaker
Bold font		Draw attention to specific feature in the discoursal pattern
^	writing a^ poem	Rising intonation

Table 3.2: Transcription Conventions

3.4 Data Analysis

My approach to Critical Discourse Analysis was shaped by a Foucauldian view of discourse and positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990). Using Janks' (1997) adaptation of Fairclough (Figure: 3.1), I started with the 'text' of the oral classroom discourses and the embodied discourses, e.g. gaze and movements; noting these discursive practices allowed me to determine what kind of positioning was occurring; I was able to identify and determine the social practices of this particular space in that I uncovered what it means to 'do writing' and 'be a writer' (or a nonwriter) in this classroom.

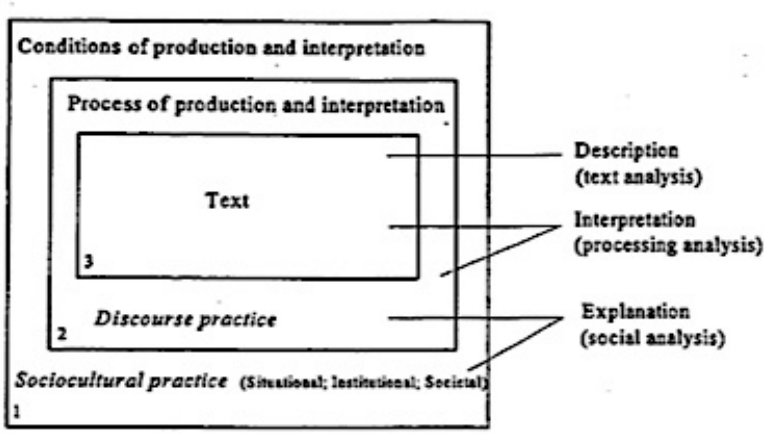


Figure 3.1: Fairclough's Dimension of Discourse and Discourse Analysis, from Janks, 1997: 330

I read through the transcriptions several times, highlighting patterns in the discourses used. I analysed turn-taking, paying attention to the teacher's initiations, how students responded to these and her feedback or evaluations of the students' responses, with particular attention paid to the teacher's discursive positioning of the students. The discourses produced in the teacher's interview responses were compared (in regards to the conceptions of writing she relayed to students, as well as her chosen teaching activities) with the discourses she used during teaching and learning activities. During the three-week observation period, I was dismayed by her apparent lack of interest in the topics she assigned and in her students' processes. I was looking forward to getting a clearer picture of what Miss King imagined her teaching practices and discourses to be like; what her goals for her students were and how she perceives her students as writers. Unfortunately, Miss King's responses in the interview corroborated my observations of her discourses and how she positioned her students as 'non-writers'. Her difficulty in talking about her pedagogy signalled that perhaps she had not thought about said pedagogy or writing. These findings will be discussed in the next chapter.

After analysing the discourse of the teacher, I used Ivanič's (2004) 'Discourses of Writing and Learning to Write' framework to classify her approach and beliefs, based on her interview responses and

teaching discourses and practices. I believed this would enable me to see if the teacher's conceptions and practices complement each other. Although I did not expect her to 'fit neatly into a single 'row' on the matrix' (226), I was surprised that her discourse could not be accurately classified in the current framework. As signalled in the literature review and as will be described in the next chapter, I had to extend Ivanič's framework with another category to incorporate Miss King's approach, which I have labelled 'procedural'.

3.5 Research Site

Windsted is a Grade 1-7 primary school in a suburb of Cape Town. The school is relatively well resourced, with 60 tablets to be used across the intermediate phase and projectors connected to the classroom PC, on each teacher's desk. There is a school vegetable garden, a library and a computer room. Extramural activities are offered, and there is a large swimming pool, soccer fields and a tarmac area to be used at recess. The halls of the school are decorated with photos and descriptions of past principals and teams, as well as students' work.

The classroom had a high ceiling, green walls and blue display boards that exhibited informational posters, many relating to language structures in English and Afrikaans. There were also some student autobiographical assignments hanging up at the back of the room; these compositions were from the first month of school. The desks sat two people, and were organised in three rows. Three students did not have a partner at their desks, evidently because these children were perceived to misbehave often. Students were seated for the introductions to lessons, but after the teacher delivered the information for the lesson, regardless of her requests for quiet, independent working, they chose whether or not to work in groups, pairs or solitarily, as she retreated to her desk.

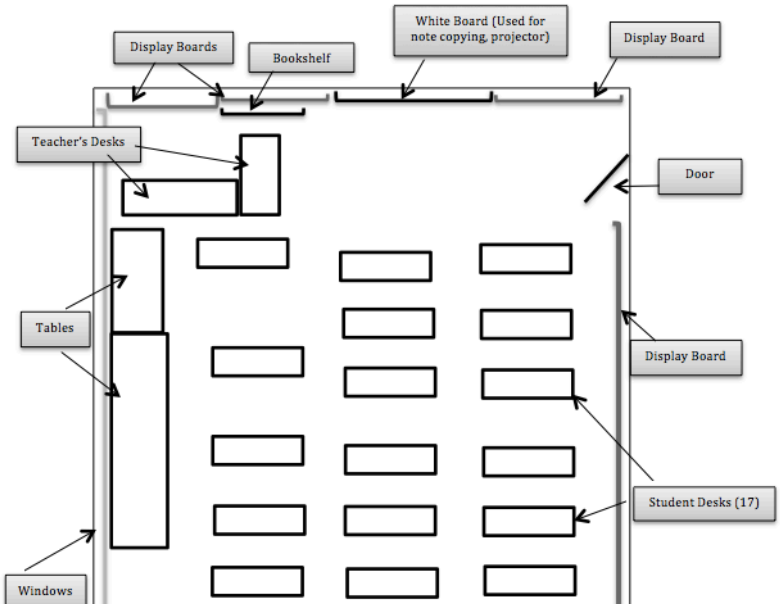
Figure 3.2: Diagram of Grade Six Classroom

I collected data from a Grade six class of 29 pupils, 14 boys and 15 girls, of different races, though about half of the students are 'white'. The students' 'home language' is English. I discovered that at least seven of the 29 students in the class wrote for pleasure outside of the official curriculum: four boys and three girls. It should be noted that these particular students thoroughly enjoyed creative processes and were eager to engage in avenues for expression; they were able to do so outside of the classroom.

17	7	Desk 1
	8	2
13	9	3
14	10	4
15	11	5
16	12	6

3.6 Validity and Reliability

When being observed, a teacher may adapt her pedagogy to what she believes is appropriate or 'best practice' – even if it is not her usual teaching approach. Similarly, in an interview, a teacher may say what she thinks the researcher wants to hear. I do not believe these issues came to fruition in my own research for several reasons. I aimed to ensure a comfortable relationship with the teacher and explained that my aim was to explore and describe literacy and writing in her classroom. I did not disclose my own teaching beliefs or approaches. Observing the class informally for one week before my official observations began allowed me to establish a rapport with the teacher and the students, ensuring they felt more comfortable with my presence whilst helping me 'get to know' the dynamics of



the class. Furthermore, that my observations match Miss King's, explanations (brief as they were) of her beliefs and practices lend validity and reliability.

As I officially observed for 15 school days, spending between 50 and 60 hours with the class, it would have been challenging, if not impossible, for the teacher to act in a way that is atypical, as her class was accustomed to her classroom practice by this point in the year. Uncharacteristic teaching or disposition may have been met with uncertainty and confusion from the students. Similarly, it would have been strenuous for her to try to sustain any sort of façade for that period of time. The students and the teacher were accustomed to each other and seemed to understand the 'routines' of the classroom. Had Miss King in fact adapted any aspect of her teaching to what she believed was the 'best practice,' there was still a relationship to observe between the discourse, the learning, and the students' identities in this space.

I collected an extensive amount of data, giving me a very clear insight into the experiences and discourses these children are exposed to and use in this space. I believe the data extracts that I have chosen to analyse and discuss in-depth exemplify typical discursive and pedagogical practices in the classroom. It will already be clear that, despite my efforts to remain neutral, I found it increasingly difficult to observe the classroom practices without taking a critical view of the teacher's pedagogy and positioning of students. This does not mean that the data are invalid or unreliable. I have described what occurred in a particular classroom; that I found the teacher disengaged is not solely a matter of opinion, as the data support my conclusions. Following CDA, I attempt to make sense of the teacher's discursive practices within the broader socio-political context of South African education.

3.7 Ethical considerations

To begin with, I sought informed consent from the school and teacher. Confidentiality has been ensured for the school, the teacher(s) and the students of the class. Pseudonyms have been used when transcribing segments of the videoed lessons and when writing up my research study. The names on children's writing have been removed.

In the parent/guardian consent letter, I requested permission to conduct and audio-record interviews with the students. An assent letter was handed out to the students in the class, explaining who I am and what I am doing in their school. It requested permission from the students to use information gathered from conversations and their written work in my research. It was clear that no students were to be penalised for choosing not to participate. Of the 29 students, only one child asked

not to be mentioned in the study, although s/he did not mind speaking with me or being recorded. I have blurred all faces in screenshots taken from the video-recordings.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the methodology used in this case study. I firstly examined the research design before describing the tools and techniques used in the data collection and analysis, as well as the the research site. I defended the validity of the study and explained the ethical considerations made. The data analysis, revealed by my theoretical framework and methodology, will be presented in the next chapter.

Chapter 4: Data Presentation and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will describe Miss King's disengagement from her students and her pedagogy using her interview responses and extracts emblematic of her typical teaching practices. I will capture her overarching procedural discourse, which I argue requires its own category in Ivanič's (2004) 'Discourses of Writing' framework. The teacher's discursive positioning of students as *non*learners and *non*writers will be made evident. Student responses will be depicted, noting that learners negotiate positions in this space.

4.2 Situating the Teacher

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Janks, 1997; Rogers et al., 2005) requires the analyst to situate discourse within its broader socio-political and socio-historical context as well as within the immediate context of production and reception. Miss King's approach to teaching and her discourses must be considered within the context of (a) the general South African education system – currently assembled around the National and provincial assessment-driven objectives, and as outlined in the CAPS document, (b) the assessment-driven culture of the school and (c) Miss King's colleagues' treatment of and low expectations for the students of this class. Miss King's discourses and pedagogical approach must also be viewed alongside a consideration of the experiences she has had as a writer and student herself and within her school environment and the broader context of teaching using the CAPs.

Evidence of the assessment-driven culture of the school is seen in the first assembly I observed, where the principal began his talk by reminding the students of the upcoming assessments. 'Grade 6, you have exams in 5 weeks so I expect that you work hard and improve so that you do well.' The teachers in Mathematics/Science, Afrikaans, ICT, isiXhosa, and Art lessons also alluded to or directly referenced assessments, often as evidence for why a certain topic is being covered or task completed. The Mathematics/Science teacher, Mr Wilcox, explained why he was 'reviewing[8]' 'important information' about the solar system: 'this will be on your assessment; that is why I am covering it.' Assessments were also used as a bargaining tool, to remind students that they should behave now so that they will do well on the upcoming tests, although this did not seem to affect the students' behaviour for any substantial length of time. The Afrikaans teacher, for instance, from her desk at the front of the room, whilst looking down at the books she was marking, advised students to stop shooting rubber bands at each other because the task they were meant to be completing will be on their assessments.

4.2.1 How the DoBE view the Teacher and her School

A member of the DoBE visited Windsted during my second week observing Miss King's class. For the second year in a row, Miss King had to send all of her students' books to the auditor, 'because students are tested in Grade 6.' The

[8] Connor expressed to me that this information was never taught by this teacher; they received similar information in the previous year. Mr Wilcox substantiated this claim, stating, 'Come on, you know this! You learn this every year!'

teacher expressed how thorough the moderation is: 'Every test we had done, every book, like, *e::verything*, [she] read every little thing and, moderated it, just to make sure that we are, you know, doing a good job'. In the interview and in two informal conversations with me during the observation period, Miss King expressed that the Department is very 'happy' with her, and more broadly, with the school. 'They were happy with the writing tasks and language, like we do *way* more than what's kind of g^iven in the text book…and they were impressed with what we do cause they're dealing with, *lots of other schools, which, aren't doing everything*' (emphasis mine). That Windsted and her class in particular are performing well is always mentioned in relation to how 'most schools' in South Africa perform. 'Most schools' in South Africa's 'two systems' (Fleisch, 2008: 1) of education, are the poorer schools where learners 'acquire a much more restrictive set of knowledge and skills' (2) in relation to their wealthy counterparts. It seems that it is being communicated to Miss King that as long as her students perform better than the poorer schools, she is considered a good teacher. Windsted *is* a well-resourced suburban school, as Miss King knows. '*Our* school's an exception, in that, we ^do do stuff above and that we have kids who … are capable of, you know, doing ^more than say other schools, and we have resources, and we are very lucky.' If it is known that the school falls in the wealthy, well-resourced group of 'types of schools' in South Africa, it is alarming that the target seems to be positioned as 'we must perform better than the poorer schools' and not 'we must perform as well as our wealthier counterparts'.

4.2.2 Feedback from the Department of Basic Education

Despite being happy with the positive views from the DoBE, Miss King describes some frustration with the system of moderation and feedback.

> Still, it's kind of just putting on a bit of a show and, making things look great, and I mean things are, like we don't have to put on a show, but actually we do because I mean, we send our ^files down, they look beautiful, they go through the work, it's all done, but **they don't ask how we feel, or what are you doing that, you know, what *could* you be doing differently like, what are you struggling with, like can we help you.** […] The advice they gave me was, it was like things to do with my memorandum, and like, that I need to be more specific with my answers, because when *she* came in and *she* was marking, she didn't really understand. […] Like that to me is, pathetic because I mark the same across the board […] **surely, there could be more productive and more beneficial feedback and advice and things that they could be giving us**.

The advice Miss King received was that her marking must be more consistent; that it must be clear when she has deducted marks. Based on the data the moderator is working with, the assignments and tests the teacher has assigned, this seems a fair assessment; all teachers must be wary of subjectivity in marking. Miss King feels that whether or not the moderator can identify why she has marked the way she does is unimportant because as the teacher, she understands the system she has used. What is most telling about Miss King's comments is her clear frustration at what is *absent* in the feedback. She believes 'there could be more productive and more beneficial feedback and advice' offered. She would like the moderators to take an interest in what the subjects of their moderation think, feel and have to say. 'They don't ask how we feel' or 'what *could* we be doing differently.' She

would like to be asked, 'What are you struggling with?' and 'Can we help you?' Miss King wants to be heard and, actually, is desperate for help[9]. Perhaps she is more self-aware of her weaknesses than her teaching practices and the remaining interview data portray; at the very least, she desires more information on how to improve her practice.

Miss King's practices and beliefs are underpinned by those of the systems she works within; Windsted, and her teaching, specifically, are moderated by the DoBE for the way assessment is carried out. The guidelines and objectives set out in the skills-based CAPS document, which is meant to be used to prepare students for ANAs, serves to undergird an assessment driven approach to schooling. The effort to position students as test-takers and assessments as the most important aspect of schooling appear to be part of the school culture and thus dominate in its official discourses. Therefore, Miss King's peers and supervisors, and indeed the broader educational system, confirm that assessment must remain a focal point of education.

4.2.3 Teacher Beliefs: 'They don't all have to be authors one day'

The use of CDA in interview data was helpful in that it not only granted me access to Miss King's expressed beliefs and how they relate to the specific literacy events in her classroom, but also allowed me to situate Miss King's discourses within the broader context of both Windsted and schooling under CAPs and DoBE. Though vague, I was able to identify her cognitive view of writing, a belief that the main function of learning to write is to be able to use Standard English grammar, and an understanding that there are constraints placed on her as a teacher in this space. A tension was noted between what she thought *should* be and what *could* be within the constructs of how schooling is done. This acknowledgment did not lead to resistance; rather there was an acceptance of her role as transmitter of rules and information. This view of her position led to a lack of knowledge about her students as writers was evident, as will be made clear throughout the chapter.

It became apparent that she struggles to describe her general and writing pedagogy, and that she is teacher-centric in her thinking. When I asked if and how she has changed her approach to writing based on her experiences with the way children learn to write, she stated that she has changed some of the topics assigned, though she did not name any; this makes it 'more exciting' for her 'to read and mark.'

She goes on to say that she believes 'there's a place for the planning' as it may help to generate ideas, so this year she has been more 'strict' with students planning before drafting. 'Last year [she] was dealing with *other* issues' as 'it was quite a, challenging bunch.' Despite not knowing 'how much [her students] are improving between the draft copy and the neat copy,' she still uses the 'practical processes' (Ivanič, 2004: 231) for extended writing tasks. The teacher believes it would be worthwhile for students to 'leave' their first drafts, 'do other things, and then [come] back to [them] at a later stage.' She states and reiterates that this would allow her students to 'be able to identify their *own* errors and their writing would, improve because…they would have time to think, they

[9] Unfortunately, I did not register this inconsistency until I analysed the interview data; I would have liked to ask her in what areas she believes she requires guidance.

wouldn't be pressured for time, like imagination you must work now kind of thing.' It is interesting to note that Miss King has not tried out this approach with any of the assigned tasks; perhaps she feels the time must be granted to her, not that she can manage it more suitably to match her theory.

Miss King states that the most important aspect of Literacy is learning how to read and finding material that is interesting, as staying 'motivated to read, can be hard, for some.' She goes on to say that 'writing, is obviously, important' because one needs to understand 'basic grammar, capital letters, 'I' with a capital letter' and how to write 'things out in full' without using abbreviated text-talk. Writing, therefore, is conceptualised as useful as a technical tool to communicate, needed to demonstrate an understanding of 'standardised English' norms.

The teacher stated and reiterated that 'the kids who concentrate and tend to enjoy writing and tend to do well in it…are going to improve…whereas, others, it's the bare minimum, and that's all they're gonna do.' Miss King views writing as something a person is fundamentally good at or not good, which will depend on his/her independent effort, interest, age (Miss King talks about the 'maturity' to write imaginatively), and how often s/he reads. These beliefs, coupled with her classroom discourses, illustrate her cognitive view of writing (Mendelowitz, 2014: 171). She believes that reading is the most important factor in improving one's writing because it will 'obviously' build one's 'vocabulary' and 'improve [one's] spelling'. It appears that she does not believe she can help her students improve their writing if they are not intrinsically motivated to do so, nor that it is a necessity. 'But how do we *encourage* those others to be interested? I don't know^. Do we have to? We can encourage so much, but…they don't all have to be author's one day.' Ironically, Miss King spoke about how her secondary education prepared her to write in university. She 'didn't really struggle with [writing] as she 'was trained and knew how to write essays,' which '*definitely* helped' her. It would appear, then, that Miss King's personal experiences support the belief that a person *can* learn how to write and to be a 'good' writer, if provided opportunities and instruction.

When asked how she would describe her students as writers, noting that she can talk about the group as a whole, groups within the class or individuals, Miss King hesitantly states that she thinks 'they are tal-en-ted … some of the work that they produce is pretty impressive.' She stated that she did not 'want to, choose' individuals to talk about; that she 'can't think of anyone really.' She then named a student in another Grade 6 English class, before recalling that Ava, Kirstin and Scarlet are 'all like big into writing stories, like their *own* stories [and that] Dana also wants to write her own book'. As it was clear the teacher was struggling to discuss her students as writers, I tried to make my question more specific, asking about which student's writing has improved the most. Again, Miss King struggled to talk about any of her students as writers.

CK: Oh my goodness…Umm…hmm, it's hard to think of someone (who has improved the most) off the top of my headdd.
RO: Okay well, maybe not the most but someone who stands out for you as someone who's improved from January to now.
CK: Umm Langa, has improved, a lot. Yeah. He has. Umm… I'm trying to think who else. I mean I think they all have generally improved. I would have hoped. You know, coming in Grade 5 level and going out Grade 6 level. … Umm who else specifically… yeah it's hard to, I would like, almost look at their books and flip through. … I'm not very good at remembering.

That Miss King cannot discuss her students as writers is a clear indication that she (a) does not view writing as an important aspect of schooling and (b) does not view her students as writers. This belief matches her discourses, which, I will argue, position her students as *non*writers. By this I mean that they are not thought of nor positioned as writers at all; it is as if students being writers is not considered a possibility in her belief system. Her notion that simply moving through schooling ('coming in Grade 5 level and going out Grade 6 level') means students will progress is indicative of her belief that writing 'comes with age' as it were. This further highlights her notion of helplessness: that she does not know how to encourage writing and that it does not register as important to her.

4.3 IRE Discoursal Pattern

Referring to over thirty years of research, Lefstein and Snell (2011), remind us of the 'conventional' and 'consistent patterns' of discourse in whole-class teaching around the world; the teacher dominates 'classroom interaction, controlling topics and allocation of turns, judging the acceptability of pupil contributions, and policing inappropriate behavior. Pupils talk much less than the teacher, for shorter durations and in most cases only in response to teacher prompts' (2). This description represents the typical discoursal patterns observed in Miss King's general pedagogy, and, indeed, her 'writing' lessons[10].

The following transcript is taken from English Lesson 1: Introduction to Poetry (Appendix 2.1). Although this is the first lesson I video recorded, it became apparent after several observations that the direct teaching method and IRE discoursal pattern displayed in this lesson is typical. These discursive moves can have the effect of positioning students as unable to explain their ideas or elaborate their ideas themselves. The students are in their seats and the teacher is standing at the front of the room. The students have been instructed to look at page 217 in the textbook: 'Poems are Pictures' (Appendix 4). Miss King introduces this topic by asking the questions that appear on the introductory page in the textbook. Throughout the introduction, a quiet murmur of students talk.

Extract 1:

1. Okay, question 3: What feelings do you experience when you look at each of the pictures? I think there's only one picture. What do you feel, Balungile?
2. S1: Dark, scared.
3. T: Okay, because it's dark you feel scared. Tshego?
4. S2: Um like I'm sitting on a boat.
5. T: Like you're on a boat watching the moon.

…

The teacher realises that Nowandle has turned to look at the video camera. This prompts Miss King to call on her.

6. T: Nowandle?
7. S3: I feel happy. (*giggling from students)*
8. I didn't ask how you feel today. (*more giggling*) I asked how you feel when you look at the picture. /L: Ohhh (*laughs*)/ T: So look at the picture and *then* tell me.
9. S3: I feel grey.

[10] The phrase "writing' lesson' is used to signify lessons in which the objective relates to a writing event. It does not, however, necessarily signify that the students actually perform the act of writing during the lesson.

10. You feel grey? (*some talking/giggling)* Is grey a feeling?
11. S3: I feel old.
12. You feel old? What makes you feel old? (*Students* giggling) (*To the* class): Just listen please.
13. S3: The dark colours
14. The dark colours, okay. Um, Siobhan
15. S4: Calm.
16. Calm! Okay. . The sea is calm, it's making you feel calm.
17. Chardonay?
18. S5: Normal.
19. Normal. You don't feel anything. Okay. Not muchh, into poetry, huh?
20. Not really (*Some laughs, some talking*)
21. Tara?
22. S6: Sleepy (*Some giggles*)
23. Sleepy. (*teacher calls on someone nonverbally, using eye-contact*)
24. S7: I feel, hungry.
25. Hungry. (*Whispers)* Shazia
26. (*Some giggles*)
27. Okay I think we got a little distracted. (*Students chatting*) Yes, what do you feel, Shazia.
28. S8: I feel like hiding (?)
29. T: So maybe a bit anxious.

The IRE structuring is evident in the above excerpt. These discursive moves can position students as unable to explain or elaborate their ideas themselves. In line 1, the teacher reads question 3 from the textbook and initiates the discourse by asking S1 what he feels. The student's response (line 2) is succinct: 'dark, scared'. The teacher evaluates this statement in line 3, imposing her own explanation rather than eliciting one from the student, asserting that the student used 'dark' to describe the picture and 'scared' to describe how he felt. Miss King initiates another turn by calling on S2. In line 4, the student responds that the picture makes him feel like he is sitting on a boat. The teacher evaluates his statement (line 5) by adding to his concrete response, telling him that he is on a boat 'watching the moon'. It is apparent that the teacher's evaluation turns are used to tell the students what their feelings and responses mean, based on her singular interpretations. S4 is told that she feels calm because of the sea (line 16) and S8 that she 'feels like hiding' because she feels anxious (line 31). S5 states (line 18) that she feels 'normal' when looking at the picture; the teacher does not merit this reply as an academic response, but rather draws a conclusion about the student's identity: that she is 'not much into poetry' (line 19) – a position that the student overtly appears to take up (line 20) when not given an opportunity to explain her response. The students are not afforded an opportunity to demonstrate their ability to explain their own thoughts and responses, a practice that inhibits their critical engagement with the topic at hand.

Returning to line 2, S1 has stated that the picture makes him feel dark; the teacher does not pay attention to his use of metaphor – a literary technique that receives much attention in 'language' exercises, when students are asked to define and identify 'figures of speech' – instead asserting her own interpretation of the response: the picture is dark, *therefore*, you feel scared. Similarly, in line 9, when S3, Nowandle, says she feels 'grey', the teacher belittles her with the question: 'Is grey a feeling?' (line 10). Again Miss King ignores the student's use of metaphor and does not ask for clarification or expansion (e.g.: What do you mean by 'grey'? Do you know that you've just

use metaphor?). Miss King does not make the position of 'expert' available to Nowandle (Davies & Harré, 1990), positioning her as inept instead. The student understands this evaluation to mean that her response is wrong; she then provides a different response that may be acceptable to the teacher, saying she feels 'old' (line 11). Unlike her other evaluation turns, it appears that Miss King cannot make a link between the student's response and a reason for it, so she asks Nowandle what makes her feel old (line 12). The student responds (line 13) that 'the dark colours' cause this feeling. The teacher indicates that this puzzling response is accepted by repeating it (line 12) and affirming it ('okay'), without any explanation from the student as to how dark colours can make her feel old. This interaction communicates to the class that accepted answers are concrete, not emotive, and supply superficial 'reasons' (e.g.: the student 'feels old' because of the 'dark colours') but no meaningful explanation.

During whole-class instruction, Miss King consistently maintains a particular kind of monologic, Initiation-Response-Evaluation (IRE) discoursal structure, which 'eliminates the possibility' of the authentic dialogue between teacher and students' (Dufficy, 2005: 62). This structure allows the teacher to maintain control over the content covered and pacing of the lesson, as displayed in this excerpt. Miss King poses a question, usually prescribed in the textbook, calls on a student by name or with a nonverbal cue to provide a brief response, then interprets the student's response and assesses its acceptability. By either explaining the response, repeating it, or affirming 'okay'/'good', she promptly ends a student's turn without any comprehensive linguistic engagement on his/her part. Miss King's desire for brief responses and her custom of explaining students' thinking without their input 'inevitably gives [her] little insight into language development and virtually no insight into [students'] thinking' (67, explaining the findings of Rymes and Pash (2001). This type of interaction, frequently used between students and teachers, can assist in 'crushing peak experiences and forbidding their possibility' (Maslow 1971: 195 as quoted in Dufficy, 2005).

4.4 Disengagement and Missed Opportunities

Often though, Miss King does not aim to explain student responses or ask for student input. In these instances, students' contributions are disregarded entirely, thus limiting their linguistic expression even further. Her absolute control over the lesson structure and the lack of opportunities for students to participate is evident in brainstorming activities, exemplified in Extract 2 below. When describing the 'Selfie' poem (which, after its initial introduction, is referred to as a 'self-reflection' poem and then a 'positive poem' by the teacher), Miss King does not ask for ideas from her students nor does she accept responses which could change her intended structure for the lesson.

Extract 2:

30. T: Okay, so *self*-reflection, we're looking in a mirror basically and we're seeing, about us. Kay? Reflecting on things that make you *proud*. So we're not reflecting on our bad qualities, that maybe we, aren't so happy with our Maths mark, shh, or maybe we, didn't make it into the, A-team for, soccer, we're not reflecting on the things that *don't* make us proud, we *are* reflecting on the things that make us happy and proud and what we've achieved this *year*. Kay, that will be different for all of you. Maybe you set a goal, to read a really long book, and you finished it. Maybe you did get into the swimming squad, and that was your goal. Maybe you've just done really well this term. Kay, maybe you haven't done as well as you

could've but you've reached your full potential in, Science! Okay? You are going to use all of these words here (*taps marker on Dylan' 'I Am' planning sheet on his desk*) kay? Maybe you've been a really good friend, you've been really good at home and you've helped mom and dad, kay? Those things. What makes you proud, about yourself and about what you've achieved this year. Okay? Because you all have achieved things this year, okay? Because otherwise you wouldn't be here in Grade 6.

31. Nowandle: I didn't achieve any goals.
32. T: You did. Yes Lumko?

Miss King deviates from the original permitted content for the students' poems (line 30). In their 'I Am' planning, they were able to list any attributes and identities, not just 'positive' ones. Over the course of the introduction, three students query this requirement, asking if they are allowed to include 'negative' qualities or questioning why they cannot. By precluding 'negative' attributes and areas of weakness, the teacher also prevents students from reflecting on their whole identities; she thus limits their possibilities for writing and, potentially, for intrinsic growth. The teacher has interpreted this task as writing a 'proud' or 'positive' poem, rather than a reflective, autobiographical piece.

Students are not asked to contribute ideas about what may have made them feel pride this year; rather the teacher provides a list of ideas she imagines the students may identify with. Miss King disregards Nowandle's input (line 31), suggests she is emotionally disengaged from her student (Blackberry, Ng, Bartlett, 2014). It is possible that Nowandle really does not believe she has achieved any goals this year, or that she needs to be reminded specifically of what she has achieved. Rather than taking up Nowandle's point, possibly as an opportunity to teach about how one conducts self-reflection, to talk with the class about how one can sieve through qualities and events to find positivity, Miss King disregards her student's feelings and input to instead move swiftly through the introduction. By apathetically replying, 'You did' (line 32), the teacher misses an opportunity to position this student as valued.

The superficiality of Miss King's questions and responses to students' contributions suggest that her aim is to 'get through' the mandated activity as quickly as possible, with little concern for student engagement or experience with linguistic expression. Collaborative and/or exploratory talk (Godhino & Shrimpton, 2003; Scott, 2009) is not utilised to assist in understanding students' thinking or to improve the clarity of their responses. They are not expected or encouraged to expand, explain or make meaning for themselves, suggesting that the teacher may not find it necessary, believes that they lack the resources to communicate effectively, is not interested in their communicative development, or is not confident in her own ability to distinguish appropriate responses.

4.5 Limited Opportunities in Writing

Extract 3 is from the third[11] 'English' lesson on a Wednesday. The teacher begins the lesson at her desk, instructing the students to turn to the page they left off on in their textbook; the students, who are seated at their desks –

[11] The students' first lesson of the day is one hour of English, the second English lesson is thirty minutes, and the last English lesson is meant to be another thirty minute session; however, the teacher chose to continue the task through the LO lesson.

save one who is handing out some of the notebooks – comply, although the quiet murmur remains present. Miss King reads out the textbook's proposed 'speaking' activities – which the class completed in the previous lesson – and then states that although the text says to create a poster about bullying for the writing activity, they will not be completing this task, as they have already 'done a lot on bullying'. As the teacher instructs the students to 'turn over' to page 224, (Appendix 5), she introduces the first writing topic of the new term: a descriptive poem about a place:

Extract 3:

33. So **turn over** to page 224. . . Kay, **you are going to**, do a formal assessment for me now, and that formal assessment consists of writing a^, poem. Kay? We've read two poems, we've done comprehensions on poems, so **you've had** lots of exposure to them, so now **you're going to** write your own. Kay. **You are going to write** a poem about a *place*; describing a place. So **look at** page 224 please, at the top; it says you can choose from a jungle, a shipwreck, a construction site or a fun fair. How boring? – But I'm going to say you can choose *any place* you like. So **put your hands up** please and **give me examples** of, *cool*, different, unique, strange, exciting places. Roshni?
34. R: The desert.
35. T: The desert. (*Lifts eyebrows as a nonverbal cue for Ava to respond.*)
36. A: Um like maybe this place where there's, it's full of snow, and /T: oka:y (*turning head to another student with his hand up*)/ the mountains/ (*Looking at the student she is going to call on next.*) Good. Mhmm (*Nonverbal cue to Balungile*).
37. Balungile: Can it be like a made up place?
38. I would like it to be real. Okay? . **Come on, more ideas**.

Throughout the lesson, and indeed, throughout all of the lessons observed, Miss King speaks to her students in the second person imperative, as seen in the bold face above. Line 1 contains seven imperative verb clauses, three of which consist of the teacher *telling* the students: 'you are going to …'. This form of address, which may diminish students' agency and position them as inconsequential in their own learning, is also visible in the dismissive behaviours exhibited in her evaluation turns in Extract 3. The consistent use of the imperative closes down opportunities for student participation before these turns can be negotiated. Miss King does not maintain eye contact with Roshni after receiving her response, 'the desert' (line 34), instead turning to Ava for the successive response. Miss King does not allow Ava adequate response time, interrupting her turn: 'oka:y' (line 36), to disingenuously praise her idea whilst again averting her gaze to the next student – 'Good. Mhmm'. By only repeating Roshni's response, Miss King is not making a strong evaluation; it signals to the student that her idea is not viewed as 'cool, different, unique, strange, exciting', as she receives no praise. The teacher's apathy for student responses was not unusual.

The effect of this discourse is that it positions Miss King as the authoritative 'knower' whilst positioning students, and initiating 'forced self-positioning' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 26) on them, as passive beings with irrelevant contributions, constructing her approach to teaching as controlling. The inherently unequal power dynamics between teachers (who represent the greater institution of the school) and students, compounded with Miss King's refusal to allow student contributions to permeate her monologue or affect the content and pacing of their lessons, present obstacles for learners; they are 'required to conform' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 23) to her

positioning, at least temporarily, if they are to maintain positions as 'well-behaved'. Her strict control over acceptable responses illustrates Miss King's refusal to position her students as valuable contributors and authors.

The teacher begins her introduction (line 33) in the same way all the English Home Language lessons I observed are introduced: identifying the task as either a 'formal' or 'informal' assessment. That the students are completing a formal assessment indicates to them that they will receive a rubric, according to which their 'neat copies' will be marked; students must abide by the rubric's criteria in order to attain a good mark. The teacher explained in the interview that by contrast, an 'informal assessment' is 'just … we writing, do it, kind of thing;' the compositions are not marked, she 'just read[s] it and sign[s] and give[s] advice'.

Miss King's rising intonation and immediate completion of her own question signals that she believes the students already know that their 'formal assessment consists of writing a^- poem' (line 33); this 'teacherly' talk is a common pedagogic tool used by Miss King and will be discussed later in the analysis. She then tells the students that they have had 'lots of exposure' to poems, as they have 'read poems' and 'done comprehensions' on them; this in her view makes them ready to write a 'description poem'.

Miss King holds the textbook as an authority, using it in all of the lessons observed, and, in Excerpt 3, insisting the students are all looking at page 224 (Appendix 5), despite her deviation from the prompt and directions on that page (line 33); however, she discursively constructs a shared feeling (between herself and the students) of opposition to the constraints placed on the students as writers, rhetorically asking the class 'how boring' the provided options are. This rhetorical question does not open up a space for students to actually think about or share how they feel about the provided options, so in effect, they are told that these options are undesirable. By allowing her students to 'choose *any* place' they would like to write about, the teacher appears to present an opportunity for creative independence and possibilities (Mendelowitz, 2014).

However, in this space, '*any* place' is much more limited than one might think. Balungile[12], a student who can often be found off-task and has many incomplete assignments in his 'Theme book[13]', becomes interested; raising his hand, he asks the teacher (line 37) if the place can be made up. Based on the initial prerequisite (line 33) – that the students must choose '*cool*, different, unique, strange, exciting places' – an imaginary place could be considered acceptable. Nevertheless, this response is disregarded (line 38); Miss King 'would like [the place] to be real'. No explanation is provided as to why she would like a 'real' place; the students have been informed, though, of the new criterion – that they must choose *any real* place.

After the teacher demands more ideas (line 38), Dana responds by admission of the teacher's nonverbal nomination, and several partners begin quietly chatting and laughing, possibly identifying places to describe. The student states that 'a shipwreck' is an interesting place to describe – a response that is disregarded by the teacher because they have 'already done' a shipwreck – meaning it is one of the four options provided by the textbook.

[12] Although Balungile does not remain engaged in writing tasks in the classroom, in his interview he explained that he would like to write about the memories he has of his father, who passed away, so that he does not forget him.

[13] 'Theme book' refers to the notebook the students use for extended writing tasks and comprehensions; 'Language book' refers to the book used for grammar, punctuation and spelling tasks.

The teacher has not taken into account that the textbook prompt could lead to inspiration for writing, nor has she questioned the child's preference. Incidentally, Dana had just finished reading *Peter Pan and Wendy*, which could have influenced her inclination to describe a shipwreck, as she would have resources to draw upon in her writing. Irrespective of the student's interest, '*any* place' does not include the 'boring' options that the textbook provides.

The teacher, unsatisfied with the responses she has received[14], offers her own suggestions: a movie set, a shop, a cool hotel, a different city, or a famous place like the Eiffel Tower or the Louvre. Her ideas are not purely suppositional; she is setting up stricter parameters for the students' to choose from. Another student presents an idea (inaudibly) that the teacher finds wanting – not because it is not 'real' (i.e.: not imaginary) – but because it is not real*istic*. In order to get the students thinking of the '*any* place' that she considers suitable, the teacher adapts her approach, asking the students to 'try and think of a place that *[they]* would be excited to be in'.

Extract 4:

39. Zayd: Space!
40. T: (*emphatically*) It needs to be realistic.

At this point, I found myself frustrated at the unnecessary obstacles preventing these students' ideas from being taken up. Why is the teacher deciding on and making judgements about which places are '*cool*, different, unique, strange, exciting'? If '*any* place' can be chosen, why are the students expected to constrain themselves to only real and 'realistic' places? Can a 12-year-old child from a suburb of Cape Town *realistically* expect to be behind the scenes of a movie set? Is it realistic for these students to describe being at the Eiffel Tower or inside the Louvre, if they have not been to Paris or seen these landmarks? The suggestions the teacher allows to permeate her monologue are indicative of her own vision, preferences and experiences;[15] if students put forth ideas that the teacher does not deem acceptable, their suggestions are disregarded. Students' perceived lack of satisfactory responses again cause the teacher to adapt her approach, leading the students to 'come up with' a response that is actually her idea:

Extract 5:

41. T: Maybe for Lumko, it would be^
42. L: Wimbledon!
43. T: Wimbledon. (*Lumko is smiling*) **Watching** a Wimbledon game.
44. L: Can I be **playing** a match?! /
45. T: So his place – no but it's a place, it's not what you're *doing*. Kay, it's a *place*. (*Student frowns and bows his head down toward his desk*.) So his place would be in the Wimbledon, Central Court.

[14] Whilst 'the desert' (line 2) and 'a place full of snow'/'the mountains' (line 3) are permitted, they are not enthusiastically affirmed or elaborated on.

[15] For example, Miss King mentioned several times over the course of my observations that she values travel – particularly to European cities. In this lesson, she presents Wimbledon and the Eifel Tower as acceptable, whereas the students' ideas are given neutral or negative feedback (i.e.: her response to 'the desert' and 'space,' respectively).

Miss King has chosen a student whom she knows loves tennis; her rising intonation (line 41) signals that this is common knowledge to the class, as she expects that the students can complete her thought. The teacher tells the student that he is at Wimbledon 'Central Court' (line 43), *watching* a match. The student's physical response shows that he is excited – he is smiling and sitting up straight – and now engaged in the topic. He asks if he can be playing the game instead (line 44), which would provide a different perspective on his description than that of a spectator. Yet his request is rejected: 'it's not what you're *doing*. Kay, it's a *place*'. The student is visibly disappointed (Figure 4.1, line 45). The teacher reiterates this instruction several times throughout the lesson, reminding the students that their poems are 'not really about *you* necessarily, [they're] more about the place.' The reason for the teacher's rejection and her insistence that the students disregard their own place in their narration is puzzling. Most obviously, it is a contradiction of the advised instructions: the students are meant to write about their experiences in their chosen places – what they see, hear, feel – both figuratively and physically – why they have chosen this place, what they miss in this place, etc. The assignment can be written in the first person, which further suggests importance of the perspective of the narrator. More significantly though, Miss King ignores the conflict presented to the class related to the presence of perspective in writing; although the aim of the poem is to describe a specific place, the narrator's presence cannot be completely removed, especially as the students are meant to write about their own experience in this place. The students have picked up on this contradiction, signalled by their questions about their chosen places. Unfortunately, the teacher does not allow the students' evident confusion to alter the course of her intended lesson plan.

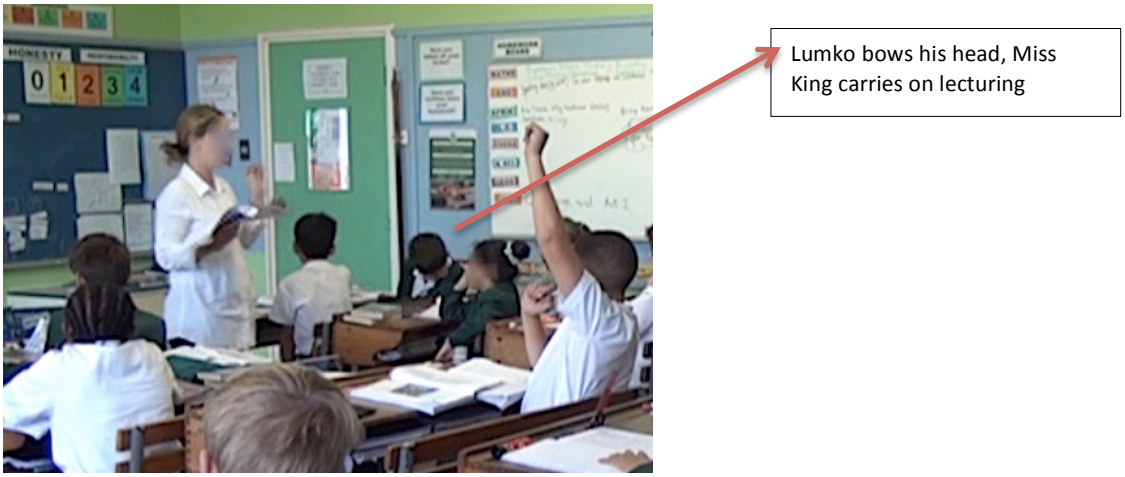


Figure 4.1: Student's visible disappointment after his idea is rejected.

This brief 'collective' brainstorm with the class lasts less than two minutes. The students are not given time to critically think about what places they might want to choose, nor are they afforded multi-sensory prompts or discussion time to generate ideas with their peers. This gives the impression that Miss King believes the class will instinctively have this information ready to be drawn upon in their heads. Her introduction then continues for another five minutes and restates, in detail, the rules she has established for the form of the poem.

Extract 6:

46. T: Kay, you are going to, sh sh sh, you are going to write a descriptive poem, a *minimum* of 3 stanzas. (*Yohh*) A stanza's a paragraph[16], how long is a stanza, roughly?
47. S: A paragraph
(*Balungile gets up from his desk and walks around to the other side of the desk to retrieve something from his backpack, which is directly in front of the teacher*[17].)
48. S: 5 lines
49. Okay, I'm gonna say between 4 and 6 lines. Minimum 3 stanzas, maximum 5 stanzas. Okay? And you are going to describe what you *see* what you hear what you feel what you taste, whatever goes on there, in the poem, using lots of adjectives **as well as^, figures of speech, like^,** (*listing the techniques on her fingers*) alliteration, personification, metaphor, similes, onomatopoeia, hyperbole. Kay? (*Balungile stands in front of teacher for a moment, then walks back to his desk, swinging on the 2 desks he must walk past, bringing his ruler to his desk*). Soo, (*reading from textbook*) um, these are some things you might want to consider when you're writing. It says: is it warm or cold? Are there people there? Are you in a city or a countryside? Are you on your *own*? Is it noisy or peaceful? What do you miss being in this place? If you could bring one thing with you to this place, what would it be? Kay, and then it says, 'reread all the ideas and descriptions you've jotted down' – we're going to have a planning page and we'll do all of this – and then it says, 'improve your sentences by bringing in some alliteration, metaphors, similes' kay? And thennn it sayss, 'put your descriptions into a poem'. It does not have to rhyme but the descriptions **should^, flow**. So the descriptions should make sense. (*looking down*) Okay?
50. Jeny: I went to the moon and then (*inaudible; possibly 'and then I ate cheese'*)
51. T: (*Shakes head*) It doesn't make sense. It needs to flow. How did you get to the moon?

Before any writing takes place, Miss King gives a monologue of her own rules and the instructions from the textbook (repeating 'it says' four time in line 49) – thus providing the information that the students need in order to score well on this formal assessment. The teacher previously defined a stanza as a paragraph; in their own poems, about half of the class, unsurprisingly, wrote their stanzas in paragraph form. The teacher asks (line 46), 'how long is a stanza, roughly?' – implying that stanzas are always a certain number of lines. Two students call out answers: the first student replies (line 47) 'a paragraph' – assumingly meaning stanzas and paragraphs are the same length; the second states that stanzas are 5 lines (line 48). The teacher affirms this answer by stating that she would say that stanzas are between 4-6 lines (line 49). It appears that the teacher is actually telling the students how long she wants the stanzas to be in their description poems, as she continues explaining the other criteria she has put in place. Miss King states that the poem must contain a minimum of 3 and a maximum of 5 stanzas and says that the students must describe the place by using their 5 senses and various literary techniques (line 49).

The instructions presented to the students in this lesson reveal several conflicts between what the teacher and the textbook are requiring: the teacher wants descriptions based on the 5 senses (although that terminology is not used) whereas the textbook offers a broader spectrum of ideas for the students (e.g.: What do you miss being in this place? If you could bring one thing with you to this place, what would it be?). In a similar vein, the teacher's reason for prohibiting Lumko's request to write from the perspective of a person *playing* at

[16] Earlier in the lesson the teacher has agreed with a student who answered that he would compare a poem to a descriptive paragraph; 'Kay so poems you're saying [poems] are like a descriptive paragraph; I would agree, it's just written in a different^, form, way.' However, the varied form is not examined.
[17] Balungile's movement is noted and will be addressed later in the chapter.

Wimbledon is a contradiction, not only of the teacher's suggestion immediately preceding the student's idea (in line 45 she tells him that 'it's not what [he's] doing, yet, in her mind, he will be *watching* a match), but also of the directions provided by the textbook: students are able to write about their experience in the chosen place – not just a physical description of the setting. If the writer is *at* the chosen place, inevitably, s/he will have to be doing something there – even if it is just 'being'. In line 49, the teacher clarifies 'flow' without any feedback from the students by stating that the descriptions should 'make sense'. In line 48, Jeny proposes an idea: 'I went to the moon'; Miss King brushes this comment aside by shaking her head and moving on quickly. She presumably finds 'the moon' unrealistic, stating (line 51) that it 'doesn't make sense' and then that it 'needs to flow' so the student would have to explain how she got to the moon. At no other time has the teacher stated that students would be required to explain how they got to their proposed places.

Miss King regularly makes use of rising intonation as an initiation for students to complete a sentence, mentally or audibly, or repeat in choral response, without intention to open dialogue to her students, as documented above. For example, in line 49, she tells students they should use 'lots of adjectives as well **as^,** figures of speech, **like^** […] alliteration […] personification, metaphor, similes, onomatopoeia, hyperbole.' Later, adding that the poem 'does not have to rhyme but the descriptions **should^, flow'**. As these examples illustrate, although students could (mentally) 'fill in the blank', they are told the 'answer' immediately after the teacher's prompt (or, atypically, after someone has called out a response). There is not enough time for students to engage critically with 'questions' in order to provide reflective responses, which could open up genuine dialogue or debate (Dufficy, 2005) – and, indeed, the intention does not seem to be to provide these opportunities. The 'questions' posed are not authentic or open-ended; rather, this speech pattern is used when Miss King wants the students to complete her sentence. This 'tests knowledge or requires children to guess what the teacher thinks' (62). This type of rhetorical questioning is the dominant questioning technique used by the teacher; authentic, open-ended questions are all but absent from Miss King's lessons.

Extract 7:

52. T: That's fine. Kay, if you're scuba, if you underwater that's your place, what are you doing underwater you are^ scuba diving (*several students say the same, several chatting separately*) How do you feel, what do you see? Kay? Before we go on I'm gonna write some points on the board and you are going to copy down a note into your theme book (*several partner pairs still chatting quietly*) about poetry in general (*pointer finger pushing on her temple, showing thinking*) just to, so you, can, get your brain thinking in that mode. Kay?

Figure 4.2: Miss King reads through the definitions of the literary terms displayed on the projector.

After instructing the students on the criteria they must follow in their poems, the teacher states (line 52) that students will copy 'some points [from] the board…about poetry in general' into their theme books. It is feasible that by 'thinking in that mode,' Miss King means thinking like a poet, which she may link strongly to using literary techniques; however, the 'note' on the board is not 'about poetry in general'; it is actually a list of literary techniques and their definitions which are read to the students before being copied in their theme books. The class is again reminded to use these techniques in their poems. 'While language is a powerful tool for imagination' (Mendelowitz, 2014: 174) the focus on *copying* these definitions does not empower effective implementation with the goal of enhancing descriptions. Rather, this page of definitions will serve as 'proof' that the teacher 'taught' these concepts; as stated earlier in the chapter, the teacher iterates that DoBE representatives have been 'happy with the writing tasks and language' because the teachers 'do *way* more' than what the textbook prescribes. It appears that Miss King receives positive feedback on these types of copying assignments.

Extract 8:

53. The one thing I want you to do in this poem which I haven't said yet is, you're not going to tell me what place you are describing until the last line, of the poem. So your heading is not going to be 'the beach'. You're not going to have a heading. Your heading is going at the^, bottom. /*Children conversing*/ So you're going to say 'sand as white as^, snow; water crashing on the shore; children laughing' – do you get it? (*Several monotonous affirmations.*) And then at the bottom your last line is gonna be 'The beach'. So I'm going to read your whole poem and the whole time I'm gonna be picturing what you are describing, and thinking, 'Ooh! Maybe it's this place, but I could be wrong, because I'm going to only find out in the last line'. (*Dana raises her hand.*) Yes?

After introducing the notes the students will have to copy, she reverts back to providing further structural criteria (line 53) for the students' writing. The descriptive poem is now also meant to be a riddle. The teacher states that

the heading[18] will go at the bottom not the top of the page, so that she can try to guess the students' chosen locations whilst reading the poems[19]. This new objective has stirred confusion in one student (line 54), who raises her hand whilst the teacher is speaking.

Extract 9:

54. Dana: What if yo:u, just describe, how you're feeling, so the, sun was beating down on me, and do you have to explain what you see?
55. T: Yeah I still want to know what you're seeing in the place.
56. D: Because/ T: The sun can be burning d, beating down on you and you could be getting hot and sweaty /D: but can/ T: and feeling uncomfortable, but what are you seeing? (*Hand motioning out in front of her face*)
57. D: But can it be from *your* point of view / T: yes/ D: so/ T: of course/ D: um so you're seeing it/ T: yes/ D: as/ T: perfect/ D: you're feeling it.
58. T: Yes.
59. D: . But what if it's very obvious what the place is?
60. Teacher: Doesn't matter. (*Hand jutting out in emphasis; several students giggle/speak quietly.*) It's not the point. (*Moves past student's desk*).

The teacher's exchanges with Dana (lines 54-60) are representative of her interactions with other students who initiated speaking turns. Dana is given only one speaking turn to ask her question without interruption (line 54). She is not given time to explain herself, despite her efforts to clarify her point (lines 56 and 57), as she is cut off by Miss King, who insists on retelling Dana to describe what she sees. In an effort to convey that her confusion surrounds perspective and narrator's voice in her poem (an echo of the contradictions and confusion examined in Excerpt 5) Dana stresses '*your* point of view' (line 57) – perhaps aiming to ascertain if the poem can be written in the first person. However, she can only make four disjointed utterances during her turn, as the teacher interrupts her four times: 'yes', 'of course' 'yes', 'perfect'. The teacher's refusal to allow Dana a chance to articulate herself prohibits an opportunity for exploratory talk and to learn about the nuances of writing. Although Miss King has been seemingly framing her speech with assessment, this interaction demonstrates the procedural nature of her discourse. She does not explain 'the point' (line 60) of the task, but rather overloads students with rules to follow; her discourse is rule-driven with a 'checklist' of what must be completed in order to be an 'ideal learner' (Makoe, 2007: 63).

As the teacher affirms that the students can write from their own points of view (line 57), Dana takes another moment to consider the task. She asks a valid question (line 59) about the conflicting objectives: 'what if it's very obvious what the place is?' If students create effective, detailed descriptions, and particularly if students use examples like the teacher has provided (e.g.: 'sand as white as^, snow; water crashing on the shore; children laughing') it will, indeed, be simple for the teacher to 'guess' the place. Miss King is exasperated by the student's refusal to silence (line 60), swatting her hands at the air and moving away from her desk, physically shutting down Dana's speaking turn. Simultaneously, the teacher responds that it 'doesn't matter' if it is easy to figure out, that it

[18] The teacher says heading to refer to the title of the poem. Perhaps she means the heading of the page in their theme books, although there is not a set heading that all students use and almost no students use a title in their headings.
[19] This also indicates her assumption that her students would title their poems as their chosen location in the first place.

is 'not the point'. Here is a student asking legitimate questions about the task she has been assigned, showing a clear understanding of purpose and writing for an audience, being made to feel as if she is wasting the teacher's time. Frustratingly, Miss King has once again closed down an opportunity to engage her students in a meaningful discussion.

After this interaction, Miss King draws the students' attention to the board, where she has written the procedure that must be followed for the remainder of their time planning and writing of their poem. She commences her monologue by stating that she will 'say the steps once.' She stipulates that '4-6 lines' must be in each stanza (previously she required a minimum of three lines) and again stresses the use of descriptions and literary techniques. She then moves to the opposite side of the board, where she has written the steps students must follow. Miss King draws attention to the 'planning page' which she wants 'done *properly*' – subsequently rephrasing this, saying that students must write in each section so that she can see they have 'shown effort', before expanding on the rest of the instructions: write a draft, read your poem to 'improve it' and 'find errors', 'swap with 2 or 3 friends' so that they can 'give you advice[20]', and then 'write your neat'.

This 'process' methodology matches Miss King's explanation of her writing approach in an interview, although, as stated, she also expressed her uncertainty of its value. 'Generally,' the students do not actually improve their written pieces through planning, drafting and peer editing, instead they 'see it as a hack…[that they are just] doing it again'. She believes there are children who will improve their compositions because they are innately interested in the processes of writing, whilst 'others just look at the mistakes – if their friends even picked up on any.' That she has the students mimic the process methodology without buying into its value, coupled with her litany of rules and steps that must be followed, demonstrates Miss King's procedural approach to writing.

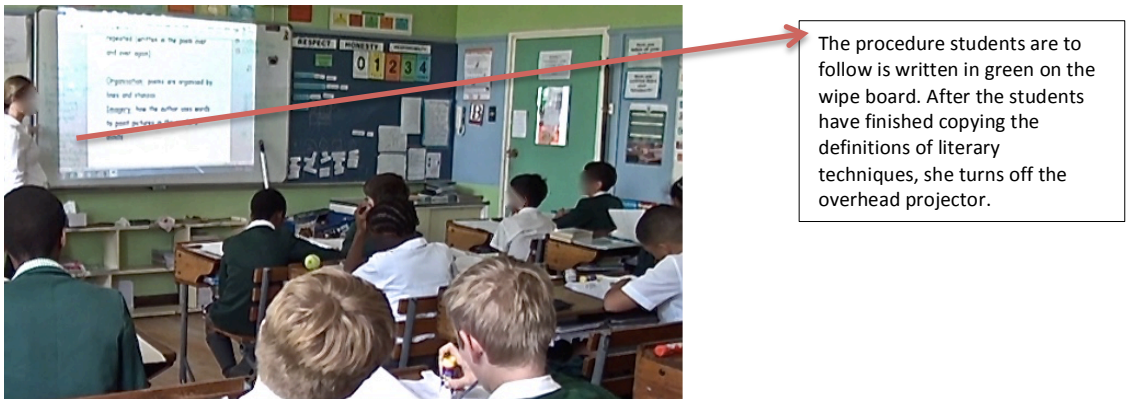


Figure 4.3: Miss King references the side of the board where she has written out the 'steps' to follow.

[20] Miss King elaborated on what 'giving advice' means on Friday, 17th October: 'Right you go to your friends and ask them to read it, check it, and you read it again yourself, and then write comments at the bottom of the page and sign your name, and they need to give you at least one suggestion.'

4.6 Teacher's dismissive approach to students and their writing

Miss King's observed interactions – and more often, lack thereof – with her students repeatedly expose her dismissive manner. She never appears excited about assignments or students' efforts and achievements, rarely offering even a smile, and makes no attempts to engage with her students whilst they write; she does not question their ideas or content, nor does she read their work before the final draft is submitted. She stays sat at her desk, intermittently warning 'sh, sh, sh!'. When students approach her, she seems impatient, as if she is puzzled as to why they are speaking to her and showing her their work; she appears only interested in checking that the students are following the rules that she has set out. Observed instances of Miss King's exchanges with students when she walks around the classroom are the same; she checks that students are writing *something*, offering cursory glances at their open books as she passes (Figure 4.4). She returns to her desk after offering very few, if any, initiations – which always relate to poem form or student behaviour – and apathetic responses.

Figure 4.4: Miss King does not engage with students' cognitive processes (Ivanič, 2004: 231) of writing.

When passing Dana, she pauses to ask the student why she is not writing her rough draft directly into her Theme book, stating: 'I want to see it in your book, I want to see your rough and I want to see your process … Just write it in your book. By her own admission, Miss King does not read her students' rough copies; that *something* must be written in the Theme book is, as previously noted, so that there is *evidence* of the students' work. This is demonstrated at the end of Lesson 8, when Miss King checks that students have completed all of the parts of each assigned writing tasks. In quick succession, she speaks to five different students:

> 'Jeny, let's see? 'I Am' and your selfie poem? … Do it! (*Referring to the list written on the wipe board of tasks to be completed*) No it says 'Number 1: I Am', then you tick it. Then number two. (*Speaking to the next student*) ''I Am' stuck in? And the ['Selfie'] poem? Done? Good. Nice picture. (*To the next student*) Picture? No picture yet? Kay. If you want to send it to me I'll print it for you. Kay. (*To the next student*) 'I Am', and the poem is done? 'I Am' is in, hey? Poem's done? (*To the next student*) Busy? (*He is reading independently*) But your poem is done?'

The teacher's focus is clearly on whether the task has been completed and that the evidence of task completion can be found in their books. Students' effort and the quality of their compositions, or whether they have learned from or enjoyed their assignment are not noted or commented on. The teacher's seeming lack of interest in and praise for her students' achievements conveys to the class that merely completing these tasks is important; that it does not matter if you try or not, if you are good at this or not, if you improve or not. If 'valuing instances of [students'] effort and inquiry' (Blackberry, Ng & Bartlett, 2014: 10) constitutes 'behavioural engagement,' Miss King clearly registers as disengaged.

If we situate Miss King's focus within the broader institutional context, it is obvious that she is 'ticking boxes' so as to be prepared for the upcoming visit from the DoBE. She referenced the purpose of this visit to the class several times, expressing that their 'work must be completed and marked' by the following week, when she had to hand in the books. 'We don't want them to see that you haven't completed things. We don't want them thinking we aren't organised.' The teacher positions this visit as a 'check up' on both the teachers and the students. The teacher needs the process approach to writing to be visible in their theme books: evidence of planning, drafting, proofreading, coupled with her 'marking' their 'final copies' with a 'Well-done!' or 'You'll get it next time!' so that she is 'seen' to be doing her job effectively.

4.7 Student Resistance and Self-Positioning

Although Miss King closes down opportunities for 'imaginative possibilities' (Mendelowitz 2014) for student participation and experimentation with linguistic expression, as well as in written compositions, multiple competing voices and discourses still exist in this classroom. As Bourne (2001) argues, 'children are not passive pawns in the socialisation processes of the school, but active participants, taking up different positions within the alternatives open to them through both pedagogic and peer discursive practices' (103). That the teacher offers narrow spaces for students to identify as writers (and as learners), although limiting, does not negate their agency; students' own experiences, identities, resources and discourses intersect, allowing them to contribute to the positions they can and do inhabit. There are students' whose verbal, physical and written responses to their teacher's instructions and, more broadly, her discourses, resist and even challenge her reflexive positioning as authoritative, knower and/or disengaged evaluator.

4.8 Teacher-Student Interactions and the Role of Talk

As the 'descriptive poem' planning begins, a discreet but steady murmur can be heard in the classroom; students are bent over their work, looking at what their partners have written and/or are talking quietly with the person next to them. Students converse with the peers available to them determined, usually, by their designated seating arrangement: those sat next to each other and in the same area maintain quiet but constant conversations. When the chatting grows in volume, Miss King warns from her desk, 'Sh sh sh!'

Scarlet alerts the teacher that her comic strip and friendly letter, both completed over a month ago and in the previous term, 'have still not been marked'. Miss King answers that she has not marked all of the assignments yet; that she 'still has about ten more to go'. Scarlet's decision to broach this subject when she is meant to be writing suggests a confidence in her position in the classroom and her ability to challenge her teacher[21]. Miss King then walks up to the front of the room and states:

Extract 10

61. Okay, Grade 6, to be creative, we can't have huge, major, loud noise, okay. So I don't mind a soft whisper, but no screaming and shouting.

This seems an odd time to make a disclaimer about volume, as the class is not behaving loudly or disruptively (Figure 4.5). After several lessons of observations though, it seems likely that Miss King is pre-empting the students' volume increasing when she sits at her desk, as they are essentially left to self-monitor their behaviour (and progress). Her referencing of creativity here – notably, her only mention of 'creativity' during any observed English lessons – although veiled as advice for success, functions principally to implore unobtrusiveness from her students. Her admission that she does not mind whispering and the fact that she does, indeed, allow talk to continue throughout writing periods, is an acknowledgement that despite her will to create a quiet and solitary space, her students will not accede to her. Indeed, despite her continuous emphasis on the unsanctioned status of student talk throughout the observations period, the students spend substantial amounts of time on social collaboration and discussion, both on and off task.

Figure 4.5: Students are told that they cannot be creative if there is screaming and shouting, despite the modest noise level.

Miss King's comments in the interview align with observational interpretations from writing sessions, indicating that she does not understand *how* or *why* talk is beneficial to any aspect of writing, as it is 'a solitary practice'

[21] My examination of the students' Theme Books proved that the teacher's delayed feedback or even complete omission of feedback is a common occurrence. It is with this understanding in mind, that it seems Scarlet was actually aiming to displace Miss King from her position as the controlling authority, and reposition her as incompetent.

(Kress's (1982: 56, as quoted in Bourne, 2002: 241). She justifies this view, stating that students are mostly 'just talking nonsense' and that it is more important for them to be 'quiet…[so that they are] thinking and actually being creative in [their] *own* head[s]'. The necessity of talk during writing periods is solely a matter of logistics: students must 'share their work once it's done' in order to proofread each other's writing. It is the only time that talk is sanctioned.

Even 'on-task' conversations are not deemed valuable. When assigning the 'I am' exercise during Lesson 4, Miss King states that it may be difficult because 'some people are not so good at talking about themselves. They find it easier to describe other people.' Yet she neither suggests nor sanctions the idea that students assist their peers in identifying each other's character traits[22]. When she notices Tshego and Lumko working together to brainstorm each other's attributes, she comments from her desk:

Extract 11:

62. T: (S*arcastic tone*) You two are brainstorming nicely, hey?
63. L: Yeah, we're doing it together.
64. T: You're doing it together, but you have different characteristics!
65. L: But we're telling each other what to write.

It seems logical that an individual, when made to write down his/her characteristics, would benefit from a friend's input and would be able to help that friend consider his/her own attributes. As Bourne, 2001 explains, 'written work, even when it is meant to be individual work, is in reality jointly constructed in social interaction in the classroom' (112). Miss King may not have considered this tactic or, as the above interaction suggests, she simply does not believe it is a beneficial resource as each student may 'have different characteristics' (line 64). The teacher does not respond to Lumko's comment, but looks at him authoritatively, tilting her head and raising her brow. He and Tshego work separately for 45 seconds before continuing to brainstorm cooperatively without further interruption from Miss King.

Similarly, when the students begin planning at the start of Lesson 5a, Miss King issues a warning to Nowandle, who is sharing her idea with a peer: 'Kay, you need to stop. Just be calm, you don't need to tell everyone what you're doing. It's for your*self*.' However, Nowandle is writing for the external entity that assigned this task – Miss King – the reader and evaluator. The purpose of crafting this poem is so that Miss King can, ostensibly, learn more about the writer and, more blatantly, assess her ability to follow instructions. In order to earn a 'good mark', Nowandle must write in accordance with what her evaluator – Miss King – wants to read. The student can be taking appropriate initiative here in finding an addressee for her writing before submitting it to her teacher as the final audience.

[22] In fact, no methods are provided to help students overcome this conceded challenge.

After Miss King reprimands Nowandle, she 'stands guard' at the wall successfully ensuring that students are working solitarily and quietly (Figure 4.6). After 80 seconds in this position, she moves back to her desk; instantly, the conversations begin again. The students' control over the amount and type of talk that occurs during writing sessions, as well as their control over the physical space of the classroom, is evident (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.6 (top): Miss King stands guard to ensure the students are working and not talking.

Figure 4.7 (bottom): After introductions to writing assignments, students control the discourse as Miss King sits at her desk.

That Miss King does not enforce her requests for quiet presents a curious discord in her practice. She does not believe that the students' talk assists their writing, evidenced by her discouragement of dialogue between students, her omission of its importance in any lessons or interview data and in the absence of classroom procedures to ensure 'on-task' talk is being maintained. Talk is tolerated simply because the students disregard her demands, and she concedes their control. The students know that Miss King does not monitor their talk, progress or writing processes; their poems will not be read until their 'neat drafts' are completed, and, from her desk, their teacher cannot impose silence, nor hear their specific conversations; therefore, they are not only able to ignore

her wishes, but discuss 'off-task' topics of their own choice, as well as procrastinate completion of their texts. Miss King's disengagement from the students and their writing helps to enable this shift in power dynamics.

This pattern repeats itself in almost all of the lessons observed. Certain students seem to spend entire sessions 'off-task'. During the initial descriptive poetry writing session, Scarlet twists round in her seat, speaking constantly with the other girls in her vicinity and Balungile frequently moves around the room to strike up conversations with his classmates. Miss King does not try to keep either student engaged in the assignment. Her only interjection was in response to Scarlet's ostentatious laughter; she asks the student how many words she had written. Scarlet giggled, replying 'About four!' without consequence.

The utilisation of Miss King's disengaged pedagogy is also visible during her direct instruction. Figure 4.8 depicts the teacher, with her back to several learners, receiving a response from a student at the back of the room. There are students actively trying for speaking turns by raising their hands; contrastingly, two students can be seen having a private conversation, and even more significantly, Langa and his partner in the front row, next to the teacher, are playing a game of cards. Within minutes, Miss King asks them to put the deck away; however, the students only move the cards to their lap, continuing their play beneath the cover of the desk. Interestingly, the poem Langa handed in (Appendix 6) for his descriptive poem assignment was Kenn Nesbitt's 'Falling Asleep in Class.' The subject of the poem is constructed as a bored student; it is not until the last stanza that the speaker's identity is revealed to be a teacher. Langa's reason for this cannot be known; perhaps, he does not believe the teacher will notice or care; perhaps he thinks she will only check that a poem has been written onto the page, without actually reading it; perhaps he just did not feel like crafting a poem. Regardless of his reasoning, that he opted not to write a descriptive poem at all; that he chose a poem that positions a teacher (within a text) as so disengaged, [she] falls asleep in class, is a form of his resistance. He is using 'the power of the pen' to question his teacher's authority and competence.

Figure 4.8: Students disengage with the teacher's introduction

4.9 Bodily resistance: Balungile repositions himself as autonomous

During Miss King's introduction to descriptive poetry writing (Extracts 1, 3, 4-7), she takes a seat at her computer, instructing the students to retrieve their Theme Books and Balungile to turn off the lights. He stomps his feet and claps his hands in rhythm as he moves toward the lights, spinning round once whilst glancing in the teacher's direction, before flicking the switch and returning to his seat, forcing a loud, playful laugh. This is not the first time Balungile enacts bodily resistance to his teacher. Earlier, during Miss King's introduction (Excerpt 6) – and, significantly, after she had shut down several students' ideas, including his own wish to write about an imaginary place (Extract 3, line 37) – Balungile stands up from his seat, walks around the desks – stands directly in front of Miss King – bends down, and begins rummaging through his backpack. Within two minutes, he stands up with a ruler in hand, takes a moment to look Miss King in the eyes and turns to walk back the way he came. As he does this, he pushes down on the two desks that he must walk between so that he can swing his legs up (Figure 4.9), before taking his seat and using the ruler to draw in his notebook. Balungile certainly could have retrieved his item by sliding over in his seat to reach his backpack, but chooses a more brazen option, positioning himself as autonomous in the (current) tightly controlled space. His decision defies Miss King's efforts to keep her students passive rule-followers. For her part, she does not react to his disruption.

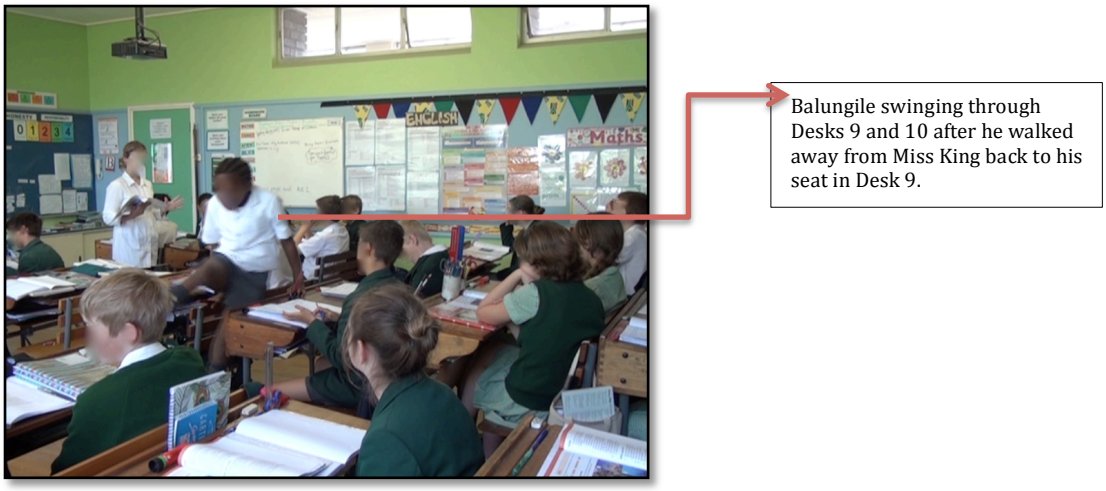


Figure 4.9: Balungile's bodily resistance to his teacher's controlling, restrictive discourses.

4.10 Students' self-positioning as 'experts'

As Miss King, sitting at her desk, turns on the projector so that the students can copy the 'note about poetry' into their theme books, Lumko initiates a speaking turn, asking a question about using rhyme in his poem. After stating that it does not need to rhyme, the teacher instructs the class on what to copy down from the 'note'. Lumko is not satisfied with her response, so he asks again. The teacher responds.

Extract 12:

66. T: Poems don't always rhyme, some of the poems I read to you didn't rhyme. 'The Highwayman' didn't rhyme–
67. S: It did. / S: It did.
68. T: No it didn't, it had *rhythm*.
69. Zayd: Yeah but sometimes it rhymed.
70. T: Yeah but not all of it . .
    (*Students continue chatting and copying the notes.*)
71. Nowandle: But it did rhyme.

In the first English lesson of the day, Miss King had read the three stanzas of the poem 'The Highwayman' that were provided in the textbook and then orally answered the questions that followed with the class[23]. The textbook makes no mention of rhyme; possibly as a consequence of this, and despite the consistent AABCCB rhyme scheme in each stanza, Miss King does not examine this literary technique. The above exchange illustrates that the teacher has, in fact, not detected the use of rhyme in 'The Highwayman' but that the students' are cognizant of its presence.

Two students immediately disagree with her, causing her to reaffirm her statement and vocalise her assumption that the students are confusing rhyme with rhythm (line 68). Zayd interjects (line 68), first confirming that the poem has rhythm ('Yeah') and then further disputing the point, 'but sometimes it rhymed'. This could also mean that whilst the students understand there is rhyme, they have not been able to identify the rhyme scheme. Miss King maintains her correctness, despite her concession ('yeah'), stating that 'not all of it' rhymes (line 70). Her response here illustrates how she refuses to take up the position of the 'learner' or accept her students' positions as 'experts,' even though it would allow more meaningful contribution to the lesson. After a pause, Nowandle audibly states, 'But it did rhyme' (line 71), ending the short dialogue by choosing to disagree with Miss King, effectively telling the teacher that she is incorrect. Miss King does not respond to Nowandle and the class continues chatting and copying down the note. That four different students disputed Miss King's inaccurate assertion, delaying her from moving on, demonstrates their resistance to her positioning them as passive and incompetent. Through their resistance and challenge of her authoritative status, they repositioned themselves as the 'experts' (Davies & Harré, 1990: 27).

4.11 Managing a Disengaged Teacher

Miss King's apathy towards her students' efforts is evident in her interactions with Zayd, as he seeks her approval regularly and most visibly of all her students. At the start of English Lesson 3a (Appendix 1.1), Miss King reminds the class of the process they must follow in completing their descriptive poems. She calls the two students who were absent in the previous lesson to come to the front so that she can explain the task, keeping one student on each side of her, and the textbook open in the middle. Zayd immediately gets up to show two pairs of students his

[23] Notably, Miss King chooses to reread the poem, rather than following the given instructions, which call for the students to perform the reading.

poem, although he has already shown his work to these students in in the previous lesson. Despite having received a positive response from his peers the previous day, today he is given minimal attention; he tentatively shuffles his feet to the front of the room to show his teacher what he has written.

He situates himself in between the teacher and Tristan, one of the students Miss King is speaking to. As Miss King turns her head to Tristan, Zayd tilts the book toward her, smiling (Figure 4.10). Ignoring his presence, she points to his poem whilst stating to the other two students, 'So like here; he's done a who:le thing and then that's his heading there' (pointing beneath the poem, where Zayd has revealed the identity of his descriptive place). Zayd looks at the teacher expectantly, then to Tristan, then back at the teacher. As she makes eye contact with him, she nods her head, saying, 'Okay', as a way of discharging him from the interaction. Zayd, however, is not finished. He keeps the book open and lifts it up toward her face, pointing to something particular on his page. The teacher disregards his pursuit, turning her head away from him so that she is facing the student to her left. Zayd shuffles back to his desk, observing their interactions; he sits at his desk with his head bent over his poem, writing feverishly. When the teacher is finished speaking to the learners she had summoned, Zayd looks up from his desk and opens his book so that Miss King can see his work. She looks back at him and nods before proceeding to her desk.

Figure 4.10: Zayd attempts to win Miss King's attention.

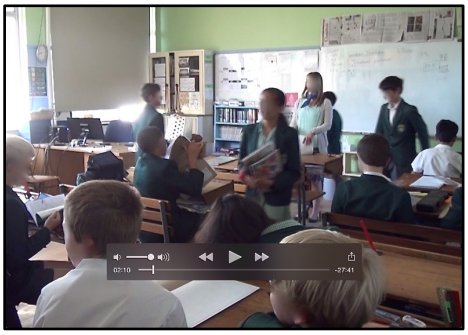


Figure 4.11: Zayd shows Miss King his work from his seat.

The teacher's dismissive attitude toward Zayd and his unrelenting efforts to win her approval is repeatedly observed. During a subsequent lesson, he brings his 'Selfie' poem to Miss King, who is standing at her desk. He places it in front of her, smiling. Her only response to him is, 'Did you not brainstorm?' Perhaps the most painful interaction to watch occurs after another teacher enters the room to provide Zayd and Shazia certificates of participation for submitting essays to the school magazine. Zayd beams with pride and faces his certificate at Miss King, holding it just under his chin, so that she will see it as she walks by his desk. As he attempts to present his accolade, Miss King nods her head and continues down the aisle to check that everyone is writing. Zayd turns round and puts his certificate into his desk.

In his interview, Zayd relates every question about writing in school to his magazine entry – a voluntary assignment where students submit an essay about a class outing or experience. He expresses concern at the way his teacher had set up the assignment: 'she like asks you what you want to write and then you like put up your hand and then she says you must write that or something. But then I think if I write [that] then it [may also] be

chosen' by another Grade 6 student. As Zayd does not identify as a 'good writer[24]', based on his belief that he 'can't come up with things on the [spot]' and that he 'usually write[s] nonsense or something,' he believes his advantage in the competition would lie in choosing a unique experience to write about. Zayd takes up the position of writer by entering the competition and has this identity validated through receiving the certificate; however, as our interview was after he received the certificate, it appears the other positioning he experiences and discourses he has access to still do not allow him to identify as a successful writer.

4.12 Conclusion:

The analysis of classroom discourses presented in this chapter depict members of this class dynamically positioning themselves and others, and being positioned by others, in a multitude of ways. In observations and the interview, Miss King emerges as disengaged from her pedagogy and her students, taking up a procedural discourse of writing and learning. Her strict adherence to an IRE discoursal structure, use of monologue and disengagement with students' writing processes, compounded with the number of unnecessary restrictions she places on her students' writing, positions her students as nonwriters and herself as authoritative 'knower.' Students' agency and power is evident in their resistance to the teachers' storyline, as they are able to reposition themselves and, often, her. In Zayd's interactions, though, we see that managing a disengaged teacher is a difficult task, and may be detrimental to students' self-positioning.

[24] A good writer, to Zayd, is 'someone who can write neatly' and who chooses a topic and sticks with it; someone who 'actually focuses on that one thing and doesn't give up'.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and Discussion

This case study is underpinned by a sociocultural view of literacy and learning. The linguistic ethnographic approach, carried out with classroom observations, field notes, video-recording and semi-structured interviews, necessitated that I make sense of what was occurring in this space; thus my original focus on the interplay between discourses, students' writing and how they identify as writers had to be modified in order to describe the particular practices of this 'niche'. An adaptation of Ivanič's (2004) Discourses of Writing Framework was required in order to make sense of the teacher's disengagement and superficial approach to teaching. Critical Discourse Analysis (Gee, 2008; Janks, 1997; Rogers et al., 2005) and Positioning Theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) were used to examine how the participants of a Grade 6 classroom use discourses, and how these discourses are used to position selves and others.

Many of the practices identified in the productive pedagogies model (Lingard, Hayes & Mills, 2003) were absent from Miss King's teaching and discourse; this fact, combined with her inability to discuss her teaching practice, points to her disengagement from her students and from her role as 'teacher'. Indeed, her discursive moves can be described as 'anti-dialogic,' as she actively works to close down rather than open up opportunities for students to speak, share and explore ideas . The goal for her students to reach in any task is to complete the assignment, with the 'ideal student' following the instructions stipulated at the start of the writing period. She does not, in fact, view her students as writers and there are no individual goals set for students in order to improve specific aspects of their writing. These circumstances have lead to her inability to either conceptualise or verbalise what a 'good' or an 'improved' writer might be in this space.

Despite the number of turns she uses to talk about language skills and techniques, her insistence on students using the 'process approach' for extended writing tasks, and her continuous references to assessments, the superficiality of these discourses prevents any of them from permeating her dominant discourse of writing. Rather, a new category in Ivanič's (2004) Discourses of Writing framework must be added; one which most accurately captures Miss King's 'configurations of beliefs and practices in relation to the teaching of writing' (Ivanič, 2004: 220) and indeed in her general pedagogy. I have characterised Miss King's dominant discourse as a *procedural discourse*, as identified below.

Discourse	Layer in the comprehensive view of language	Beliefs about writing	Beliefs about learning to write	Approaches to the teaching of writing	Assessment Criteria
Procedural Discourse	The Written Text	Cognitive view of writing. Writing is a schooling activity whereby students follow a strict set of rules to demonstrate ability.	Learning to write requires a person to innately enjoy writing and want to improve.	Superficial coverage of topics and skills. Strict guidelines for students to adhere to.	Grammatical accuracy and adherence to set instructions

Figure 5.1: Procedural Discourse Category added to Ivanič's Discourses of Writing framework

Miss King follows the skeleton structure provided to her in the CAPs document, but adds nothing to it, other than extra 'language' exercises. Yet, as she explains in her interview, the DoBE is 'happy with her' and 'happy with her books.' That a teacher in a well-resourced suburban school – a school with excellent infrastructure and learning materials; where most, if not all, of the students learn in their home language of English – can be this disengaged with her pedagogy, this uninvolved in her students' learning, but still be considered a 'good teacher,' should not be dismissed as a unique situation in one case study. It signals that the current system of CAPS, WCED and the ANAs *allows* a teacher to be disengaged in terms of all the features of productive pedagogy. The implicit messaging is that 'good schools' need only to outperform the poorer schools of South Africa's 'two systems' in order to be praised.

This classroom proved itself to be a space where power dynamics could be seen in action; the teacher, representing institutional power (Davies & Harré, 1990), authoritative as she positioned herself to be, was constantly being resisted and repositioned by students; sometimes she was positioned as incompetent, e.g.: when her students question her understanding of a text, as seen in Extract 12, or when students, like Zayd, worked to position her as an engaged participant. For their part, the students did not allow Miss King to 'rule' over them; in a way, it felt like they tolerated her long speaking turns and superfluously restrictive rule-making because they knew that after her monologues were complete, she would retreat to her desk, and they would gain autonomy of the space once more. During the actual writing time, although constrained by guidelines, students spoke and moved in the ways they wanted to; they completed their tasks when they wanted to. Individually and as a group, they repositioned themselves as capable meaning-makers. Miss King, though resistant to their positioning, allowed for it.

I note my regret at not being able to more fully describe the learners' experiences with writing and the compositions they produce both in and out of the classroom. Although I could only provide specific examples depicting how the students experienced and responded to the teacher's positioning of them, evidence from my interactions with students showed that they are not uninterested in writing or

literacy; that many students thoroughly enjoy creative processes, and are keen to find avenues for expression. It is fortunate that some of the children have access to discourses and positions outside the classroom, which enable them to identify as successful writers; however, not all children are given such access. Miss King's cognitive view of writing is thus a self-fulfilling prophecy: if she does not believe students' writing can improve within her classroom, she will inhibit, or at the very least, not assist, improvement; therefore, her students may indeed 'prove' themselves to be the nonwriters she positions them as. Miss King's narrow spaces for opportunities of development and experimentation with 'being a writer' certainly do not best serve the students of her class.

It must be reiterated, that the 'differentiating effects of apartheid persist' (Hendricks, 2007: 103) and inform the common view of South African education; the positive feedback Miss King and her school received from the DoBE representative underlies the false sense of success prevalent in well-resourced suburban schools in South Africa. To 'do well' in this system, advantaged schools only need to outperform those schools facing additional, severe systemic challenges. This study demonstrates the need for more ethnographic research in the well-resourced schools to uncover the practices and discourses being used to 'pass through' the education system.

Appendix 1

TWENTY ELEMENTS OF PRODUCTIVE PEDAGOGIES

1. *Higher-order Thinking* – Are higher-order thinking and critical analysis occurring?
2. *Deep Knowledge* – Does the lesson cover operational fields in any depth?
3. *Deep Understanding* – Do the work and response of students provide evidence of depth of understanding of concepts or ideas?
4. *Substantive Conversation* – Does classroom talk break out of the initiation/response/evaluation pattern and lead to sustained dialogue between students, and between teachers and students?
5. *Knowledge Problematic* – Are students critiquing and second-guessing texts, ideas and knowledge?
6. *Meta-language* – Are aspects of language, grammar and technical vocabulary being foregrounded?
7. *Knowledge Integration*– Does the lesson range across diverse fields?
8. *Background Knowledge* – Is there an attempt to connect with students' background knowledge?
9. *Connectedness to the World* – Do the lesson and the assigned work have any resemblance or connection to real-life contexts?
10. *Problem-based Curriculum* – Is there a focus on identifying and solving intellectual and/or real-world problems?
11. *Student Control* – Do students have any say in the pace, direction or outcomes of the lesson?
12. *Social Support* – Is the classroom a socially supportive and positive environment?
13. *Engagement* – Are students engaged and on task?
14. *Explicit Criteria* – Are the criteria for judging student performance made explicit?
15. *Self-regulation* – Is the direction of student behaviour implicit and self- regulatory or explicit?
16. *Cultural Knowledges* – Are diverse cultural knowledges brought into play?
17. *Representation* – Are deliberate attempts made to increase the participation of students of different backgrounds?
18. *Narrative* – Is the style of teaching principally narrative, or is it expository?
19. *Group Identity* – Does the teaching build a sense of community and identity?
20. *Citizenship* – Are attempts made to foster active citizenship?

Appendix 2.1

Week 1 English Lessons					
Total time allotted for writing tasks, Week 1: 45 minutes					
Lesson 1 ***Tuesday***[25] **30 minutes** **07:50-08:20**	**Lesson 2a** ***Wednesday*** **60 minutes** **07:50-08:50**	Lesson 2b **Lesson 3** ***Wednesday*** **30 minutes** **10:40-11:10**	Lesson 2c **Lesson 4** ***Wednesday*** **50 minutes** **12:40-13:30**	Lesson 3a **Lesson 5** ***Friday***[26] **60 minutes** **08:20-08:50**	Lesson 3b **Lesson 6** ***Friday*** **20 minutes** **10:20-10:40**
Introduction to poetry & Oral Comprehension	*Introduction, Oral Comprehension & Language Practice*	*Oral Comprehension*	*Introduction to writing a Descriptive Poem*	*Oral Presentation & Writing a Descriptive Poem*	*Spelling Test & Writing a Descriptive Poem*
Comprehension: 'The Railway Train' by Emily Dickinson Oral, whole-class teaching (*15:00*)	Respond to Textbook Questions regarding the Pictures Oral, whole class teaching (*10:00*)	Comprehension: 'The Long Way Home' – a poem about bullying Oral, whole-class teaching	Introduction to writing a Description Poem (*10:00*)	Rubric for Oral Presentation (Formal Assessment) Whole-class (*12:00*)	Spelling Test (*15:00*)
Discuss two pictures with Partner[27] (*1:40*)	Comprehension: 'The Highwayman' Whole-class teaching Oral (*30:00*)	Two pairs of students role-play a bullying situation for the class (Question 4 from the page 223 in the textbook)	Students to copy definitions of literary techniques from the board (*15 minutes*)	Writing a Description Poem: Reintroduction (*10:00*)	Continue Writing a Description Poem (*5:00*)
	'Language Practice' Oral (*5:00*)		Planning of poem using designated planning sheet 19:20 – teacher hands out	Writing a Description Poem (*10:00*)	
	Life Skills: Introduction to Stereotypes (*15:00*)				

[25] The class does not have English on Mondays.
[26] On Thursday, the class took the 'Systemic Tests'; therefore I was not permitted to conduct observations. There was no English lesson.
[27] The students were given one minute, thirty seconds at the end of the lesson to 'discuss' their favourite picture with a partner in order to give feedback to the teacher. When the bell rang, the teacher advised the students to get ready for the Maths lesson. The Maths teacher, however, did not arrive for another 9 minutes.

Appendix 2.2

Week 2 English Lessons					
Total time allotted for writing tasks, Week 2: 90 minutes					
Lesson 4, Tuesday ***30 minutes*** **07:50-8:20**	**Lesson 5a, Wednesday** ***60 minutes*** **07:50-08:50**	**Lesson 5b, Wednesday** ***30 minutes*** **10:40-11:10**	**Lesson 5c, Wednesday** ***50 minutes*** **12:40-13:00**	**Lesson 6, Thursday** ***60 minutes*** ***8:20-10:20***	**Lesson 7, Friday** ***60 minutes***
Introduction to writing 'I Am' poem	*'I Am' and 'Selfie' poems; Mark 'Anne Frank' comprehension*	*'I Am' and 'Selfie' poems; Unprepared Reading*	*Geography instead of English*	*Games on Tablets Continue writing poems*	*Completing activity*
Introduction to 'I Am' poem (Students not done with DP to finish / 'I Am' poem) <-at what point were they able to/did they start writing? (*25:00*)	Complete 'I Am' poem / Introduction to 'Self-Reflection' poem (*30:00*)	Continue working on 'I Am' and/or Selfie poems Unprepared reading during the whole lesson (*30:00*)	*Geography*[28] - Population Density: Clusters and Scattering	Games on tablets[29] (1 hour 30 minutes)	History Instead Of English
	Mark 'Anne Frank' Comprehension from previous term (*15:00*)			Students working on their 'I Am' poem or Selfie poem (*15:00*)	
	Continue working on poems – I Am and/or Selfie poems (*15:00*)				

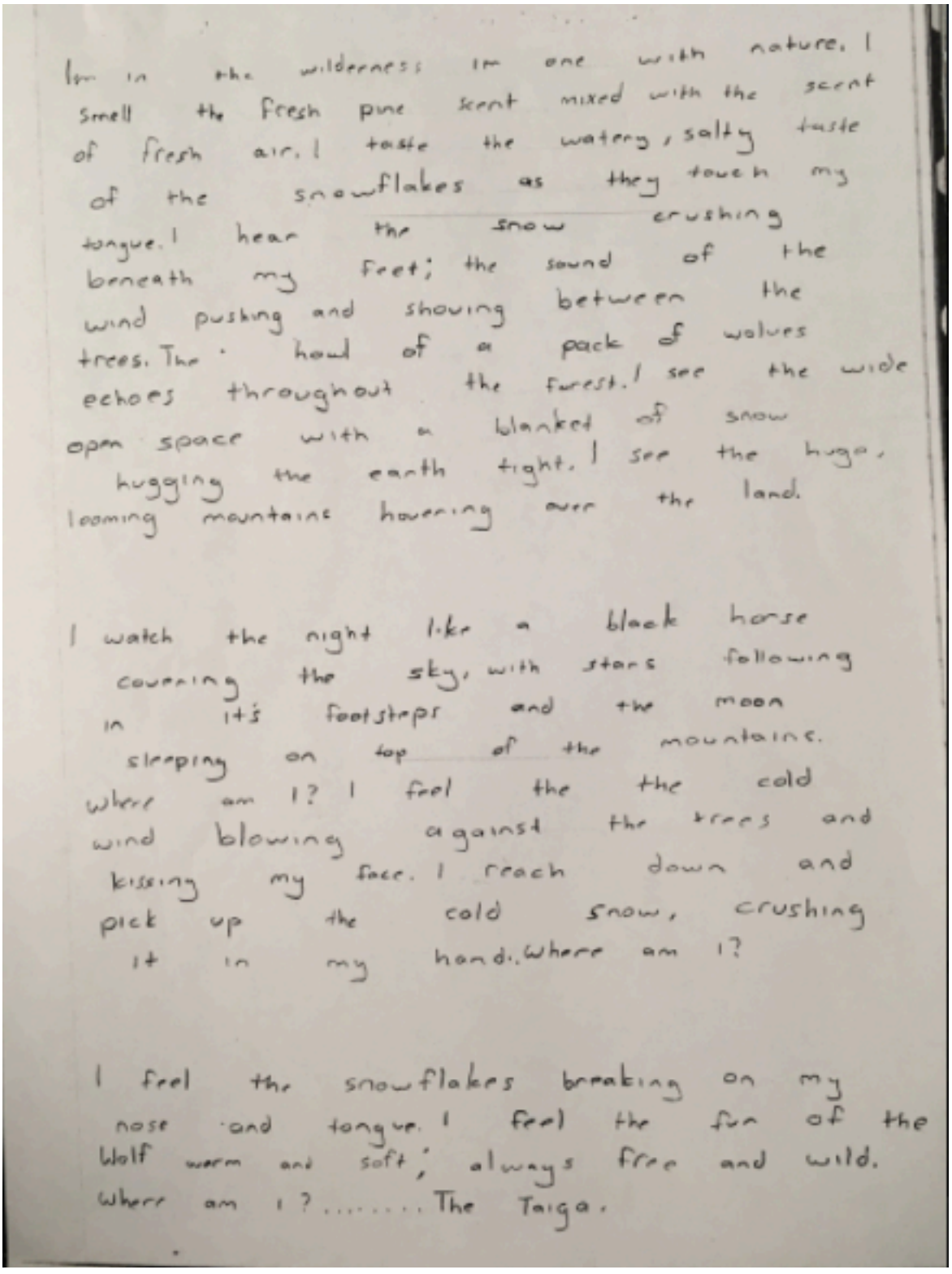
[28] Geography done instead of English; students were informed in the previous English lesson, Miss King states: Right we're not gonna do English after the break, we're gonna look at our Geography books because they're such a disgrace, we're gonna do Geography.
[29] School photograph day – Mr Pent with class. Students have had the tablets since lesson 1, 8:20am

Appendix 2.3

Week 3 English Lessons						
Total time allotted for writing tasks, Week 3: 0 minutes (Although students were completing punctuation tasks during the oral presentations)						
Lesson 8, Monday ***30 minutes*** ***11:10-11:40***	**Lesson 9a, Tuesday** ***30 minutes*** ***07:50-8:20***	**Lesson 9b, Tuesday** ***60 minutes*** ***13:30-14:30***	**Lesson 10** ***Wednesday***[30] **50 minutes** **12:40-13:30**	**Lesson 11, Thursday** ***60 minutes*** ***09:20-10:20***	**Lesson 12a, Friday**[31] ***30 minutes*** ***08:20-08:50***	**Lesson 12b, Friday** ***60 minutes*** ***10:20-10:40***
Prepared orals *Punctuation worksheets*	*Prepared orals* *Punctuation worksheets*	*History group meetings* *Prepared orals* *Punctuation worksheets*	*Prepared orals* *Punctuation worksheets*	*Geography*	*Formal Assessment:* *Instructions* *Comprehension*	*Read independently*
History lesson: Prepared Orals/ Punctuation worksheets (*25:00*)	Continuation of Prepared Orals (*25:00*)	*History lesson:* Groups discuss History presentation (*15:00*)	Prepared Orals/ punctuation worksheets (*30:00*)	*Geography:* Read through text book; oral question and answer session (*45:00*) *Life Skills*: Read from text book (*15:00*)	Instructions Comprehension (*Formal Assessment*) (*30:00*)	Read or study independently (*30 minutes*)
		Teacher explanation of 'Test 19 & 20" punctuation worksheets (*25:00*)	*Life Skills:* Prepared Orals (*30:00*)			
		Prepared Orals/Punctuation worksheets (*15:00*)				

[30] Students completing a 'Work Studies' seminar, meant to teach studying skills, for the morning. I was asked not to come in until the afternoon.
[31] Miss Knight absent. The researcher was informed earlier in the week.

Appendix 3: Stanzas as Paragraphs

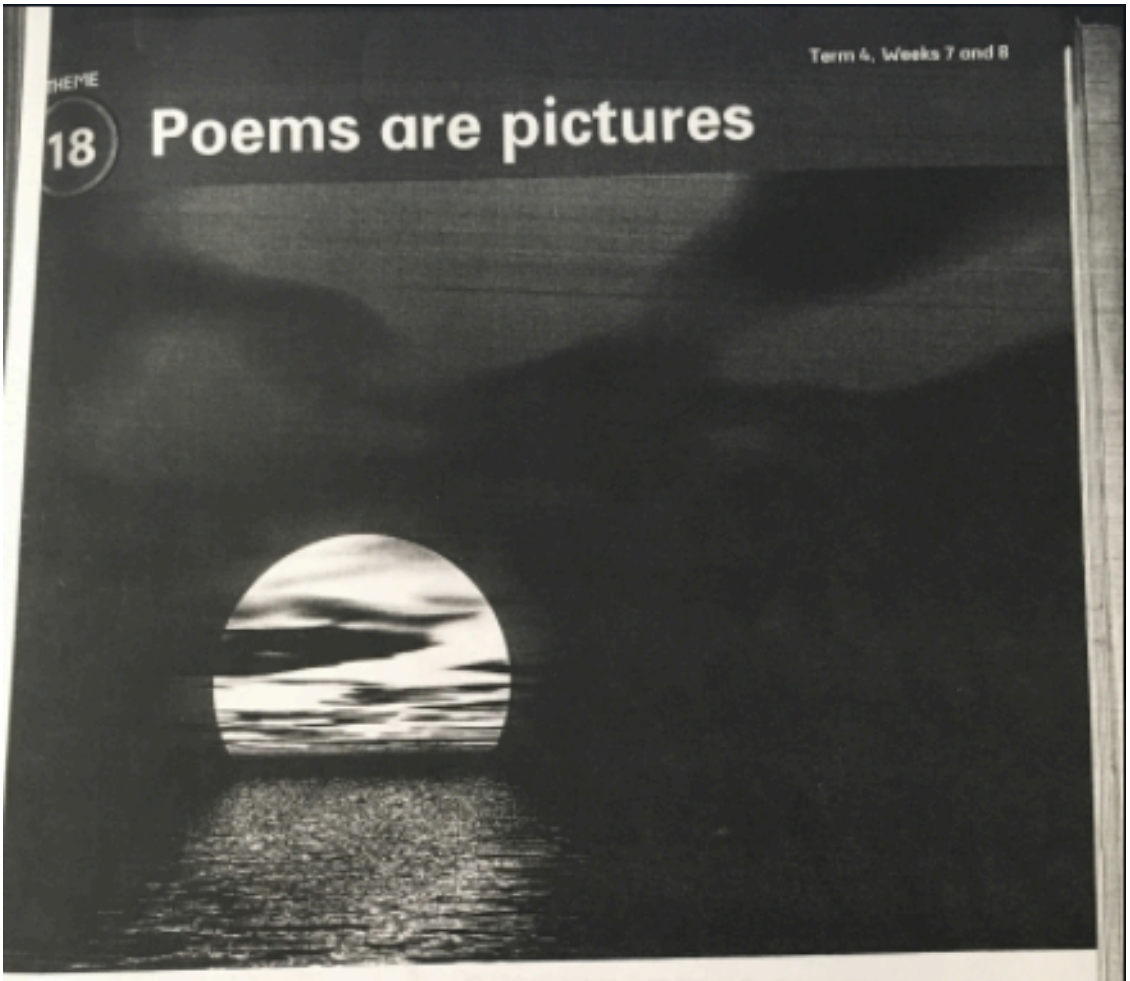


I'm in the wilderness im one with nature. I smell the fresh pine scent mixed with the scent of fresh air. I taste the watery, salty taste of the snowflakes as they touch my tongue. I hear the snow crushing beneath my feet; the sound of the wind pushing and shoving between the trees. The howl of a pack of wolves echoes throughout the forest. I see the wide open space with a blanket of snow hugging the earth tight. I see the huge, looming mountains hovering over the land.

I watch the night like a black horse covering the sky, with stars following in it's footsteps and the moon sleeping on top of the mountains. where am I? I feel the the cold wind blowing against the trees and kissing my face. I reach down and pick up the cold snow, crushing it in my hand. Where am I?

I feel the snowflakes breaking on my nose and tongue. I feel the fur of the Wolf warm and soft; always free and wild. Where am I? ..... The Taiga.

Appendix 4



Term 4, Weeks 7 and 8

THEME 18

Poems are pictures

In this theme:

- **Listen and speak**: Listen to poems and summarise main ideas and specific details of poems. Role-play ways of dealing with bullying.
- **Read**: read and respond critically to three poems.
- **Write**: write poetry. Write an anti-bullying slogan.
- **Language**: practise using the subject and object; parentheses; figures of speech.

Starting off

Discuss the answers to the question in pairs.

1. Do you agree with the title of this theme? Explain your answer.
2. To what else would you compare a poem? Explain how the two things are similar.
3. What feelings do you experience when you look at each of the pictures?
4. Why do you think the pictures make you feel that way?

Appendix 5

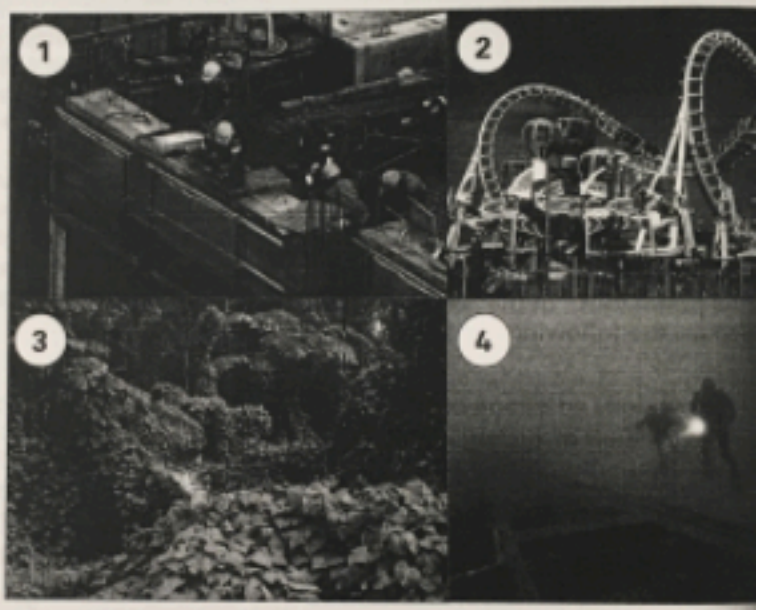
Write

You are going to write a poem about a place. You can choose from a:

jungle | shipwreck | construction site | funfair

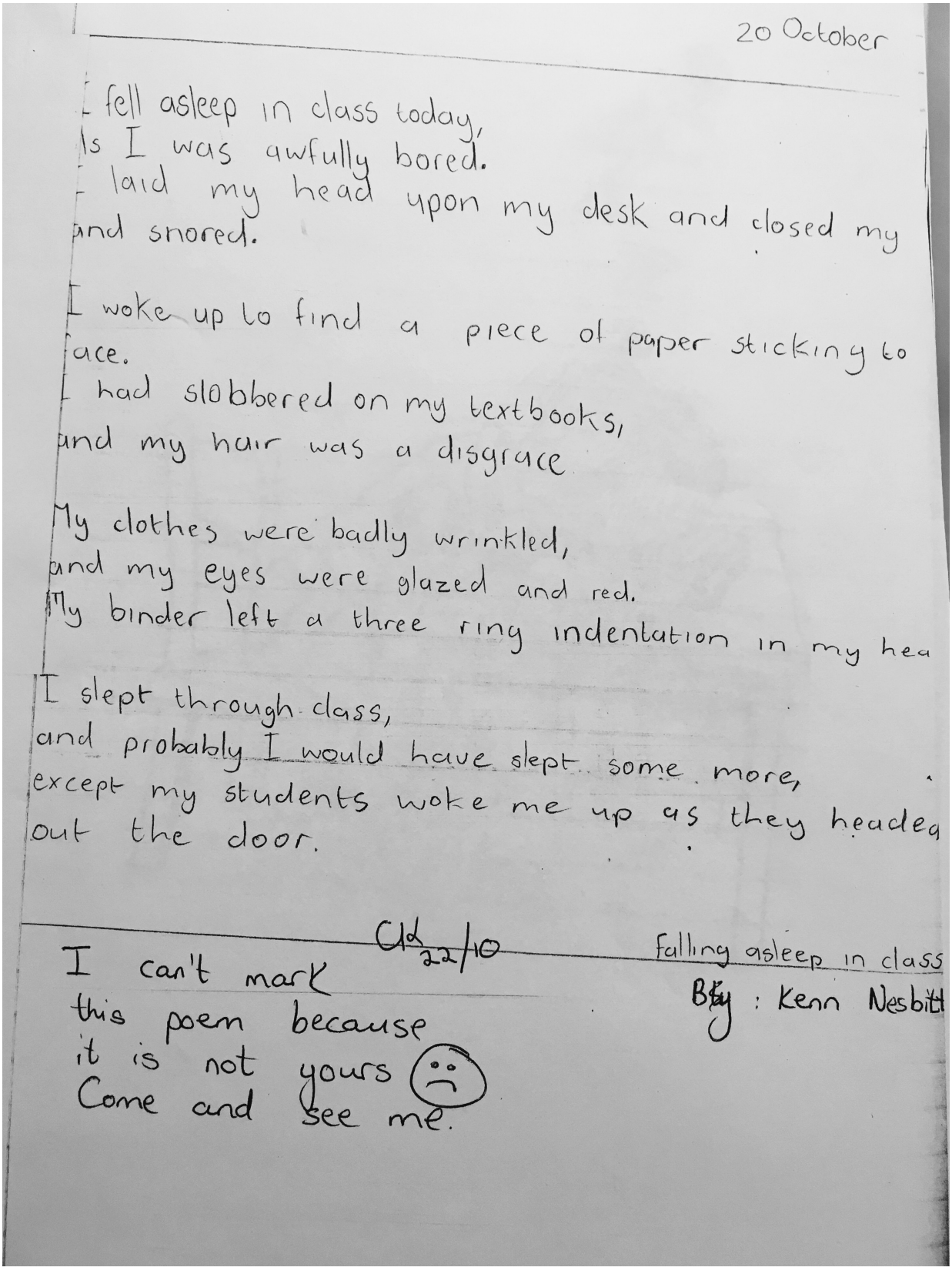
Before you write

1. Spend five minutes looking at these four photographs. Decide which one interests you the most.



2. Get into pairs. Think about the following questions and talk them through with your partner.
   In your imaginary place:
   - Is it warm or cold?
   - Are there other people there too?
   - Are you in a city or in the countryside?
   - Are you on your own?
   - Is it noisy or peaceful?
   - What do you miss being in this place?
   - If you could bring one thing with you to this place what would it be?

Appendix 6: Langa's copy of Kenn Nesbitt's Poem, handed in as his 'descriptive poem'



20 October

I fell asleep in class today,
As I was awfully bored.
I laid my head upon my desk and closed my
and snored.

I woke up to find a piece of paper sticking to
face.
I had slobbered on my textbooks,
and my hair was a disgrace.

My clothes were badly wrinkled,
and my eyes were glazed and red.
My binder left a three ring indentation in my hea

I slept through class,
and probably I would have slept some more,
except my students woke me up as they headed
out the door.

Cld 22/10

I can't mark
this poem because
it is not yours
Come and see me.

Falling asleep in class
By : Kenn Nesbitt

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